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THE GRAY WHALE  
FLAGSHIP



# SUBMARINE CHUMS SERIES

BY SHERWOOD DOWLING

The Cruise of the Gray Whale

The Gray Whale—Warship

The Gray Whale—Flagship

*Price 50 cents net each*

D. APPLETON & COMPANY  
PUBLISHERS      ∴      ∴      NEW YORK









“Give it to him,” Harry cried.”



SUBMARINE CHUMS

# THE GRAY WHALE FLAGSHIP

BY

SHERWOOD DOWLING

AUTHOR OF "THE CRUISE OF THE GRAY WHALE,"  
AND "THE GRAY WHALE—WARSHIP".



FRONTISPIECE



NEW YORK AND LONDON  
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

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# THE GRAY WHALE— FLAGSHIP

## CHAPTER I

### THE CHUMS ENTER BUSINESS

THE Shelter Cove Navy Yard was peaceful and quiet to-day. Out of the water the *Gray Whale* and the *Little Giant*, roughly built submarines, bobbed sleepily with the tide. Ashore, in front of a weather-beaten shack, Admiral Bob Drake hobnobbed with his crew.

Suddenly Bob plucked his dollar watch from his pocket. "Minute of nine," he said.

There was a scurrying. Arthur Farrant, more familiarly known as "Red," ran to the sapling flagpole and seized the halyards. Captain Danny Dugan, of the *Little Giant*, stood stiffly beside him. Ned Perry and Harry King, of the *Gray Whale*, and Frank Smith,



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

of the *Little Giant*, lined up at attention facing the pole.

"Nine o'clock," called Admiral Bob.

"Raise colors," called Captain Danny.

Farrant pulled the halyards, and a small American flag slowly fluttered to the top of the pole. Perry, King and Smith raised their hands to their caps in salute.

Another moment and the halyards had been lashed. All at once the stiffness went out of the boys. They broke from their stations. But now, instead of returning to the shack, they went down to the water's edge, where rowboats were beached. They entered these flat-bottoms—Harry King said that they "embarked"—and rowed out to where the submarines bobbed. Bob, Harry and Perry entered the *Gray Whale*. Danny, Farrant and Smith boarded the *Little Giant*. A strip of red bunting was run up on a short staff forward on the *Gray Whale*. It was the Admiral's flag. And a moment later she brought



## THE CHUMS ENTER BUSINESS

up her anchor and made way slowly toward the inlet that led out to the broad bosom of Little Giant Creek. The *Little Giant* followed.

Never did these boys start their day's play without a salute to the colors. They knew that the flag should go up at sunrise. But as they seldom camped overnight at the shack a sunrise raising was impossible. So they had ruled that each morning at nine o'clock the colors should go up. After that they could fish and cruise as much as they liked.

Just now they were after fish for the noon-day meal. In the past they had been content to bait for the big fresh water catfish that they had found in the Creek. But the Creek had been stocked with small-mouthed bass the year before, and now only bass interested them.

They had caught a few each day. They were not satisfied. They had an idea that there were places on the Creek where the bass



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

fishing ought to be better than a few a day. Not that they were fishing hogs. They did not kill for the mere love of killing. But when they went out to fish for a meal, they wanted to get that meal as soon as possible. Then they were free for other sport.

Day by day they had tried the likely places, and had kept a scrupulous record of results. To-day they were to go farther up the Creek than they had ever been before.

Keeping on the surface, the submarines journeyed in single file. Finally the anchors were let go. The boats slowly swung around with the tide. There was just the proper length of water between them.

Harry King poked a grinning face up through the *Gray Whale's* hatch. "How's that for shipshape?" he demanded.

Farrant, on the *Little Giant*, did not grin. Farrant was a serious boy, even in his play. He saluted gravely. "Captain Dugan's compliments, and can he start to fish?"



## THE CHUMS ENTER BUSINESS

Harry poked his head down the hatch. "How about fishing, Bob?" he called. His head reappeared. "The Admiral says to go to it," he reported. Harry had a vast respect for naval etiquette when it came to flags and maneuvers, but he was too breezy a youngster to pay much attention to his language.

Danny Dugan, with a fly-rod, had bobbed up from the *Little Giant's* hatch. These boys had no artificial flies. They had to depend on live bait. Danny ran a hook carefully into the mouth of a killie and out through its gills. Gently he lowered the line into the water. It floated off, its gay little bob dancing in the morning sunlight.

Admiral Bob came up from the hold of the *Gray Whale* and watched with the others. They always timed the first fish. Once, lower down, the first catch had been struck five minutes after a line went over.

"One minute," said Bob.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"I'd like to see some quick action," Danny grumbled.

Then Bob gave a sudden quiver.

"There he is," Harry whispered. "There's your quick action."

Danny Dugan, wise little angler, did not strike at once. The fish, he could have told you, was only mouthing the bait. He would run off a bit, and when he did strike in earnest the bob would give a sudden downward dart.

So Danny gave him a dozen feet of line. And then the bob jumped, and Danny jerked the line smartly. And at that instant a small hurricane in the shape of a fish broke from the water, swirled up into the sunlight, and flopped back into the stream.

"Hooked!" cried Harry. "What's the time, Bob?"

"Two minutes fifteen seconds," Bob Drake answered.

Slowly and carefully Danny played the



## THE CHUMS ENTER BUSINESS

fish. 'At last it came into the boat, its strength gone. They looked at it admiringly.

"Half a pound," said Danny proudly.

"All of that," Bob agreed.

Harry scampered into the hold of the *Gray Whale*.. "Where's my tackle?" he shouted. "I want some of that. Only two minutes and fifteen seconds, eh?"

Five minutes later they were all fishing, spread out so that their lines would not snarl. An hour later they had fish enough for the meal.

"Thunder!" breathed Harry. "If they bite that way at half-past nine in the morning, how would they bite right after sunrise?"

That question was too much for any of the boys. Only one thing were they sure of—they had found the fishing place for which they had been looking. On their private map of the Creek they marked its location, and named it Bass End, because it marked the end of their search for bass.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

In the days that followed the fish continued to bite eagerly at the place. But after a time all three of the boys grew weary. When Danny Dugan had first built the *Little Giant* and had contested with the *Gray Whale* for control of the Creek, the boyish warfare had kept their days full of excitement.\* Now there was no war and only one fleet, and so they yearned for something to turn up. Even a visit to Mr. Hinkelstedt, the old boat repairer, had ceased to be an adventure. For Mr. Hinkelstedt had told all his adventures, not once but many times, and they knew every foot and corner of his dusty, fascinating workshop.

They discussed the situation as they cooked their fish each noon. How could they stir up some excitement? Finally the day came when Frank Smith did not appear to help take the *Little Giant* from the Hinkelstedt float to the Cove, and next day, after flag-raising, Harry

\* See "The Gray Whale—Warship."



## THE CHUMS ENTER BUSINESS

yawned and said he'd lounge about the shack, and wouldn't go after bass.

"That settles it," said Danny. "We must get some interest into things, or this crowd will break up. Smith stays away and Harry yawns."

Bob nodded. "What can we do?"

There was no answer.

"Look here," Harry cried suddenly, "let's take the boats back to the Hinkelstedt float. Then we'll scatter. Each fellow must think of some adventure. And to-morrow we'll come back and see who has the best plan."

They rowed out to the submarines. An hour later the boats were tied up and they had separated.

Next morning they met again. After the flag was raised they sat about outside the shack. Bob Drake took charge.

"I have thought of nothing," he said frankly. "How about you, Harry?"

"Nix."



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"Perry?"

"Nothing."

"Farrant?"

"Same here."

"Smith?"

"I've thought so much I have a headache," the boy answered. "And I haven't any kind of a plan."

"Dugan?"

"I have something," said the *Little Giant's* captain. "It may not sound good to you fellows."

"Tell us," Harry called eagerly.

"Well, I thought that if we could find some way to have a lot of fun, and at the same time make some money, we'd be killing two birds with the one stone. How about that?"

"Right-o!" cried Smith. "What else, Captain?"

"I thought we could go into business."

Harry's face lost its eagerness. "Oh, that settles it. I want some excitement, but I don't



## THE CHUMS ENTER BUSINESS

want to desert the *Gray Whale*. How can we go into business? We'd have to have money to start, and we'd have to go on shore."

"We wouldn't," said Danny.

Harry jumped up. "Not have to leave the boats? Go into business with them?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"We could take fellows down on submarine rides and charge so much a ride, couldn't we?"

They all jumped up at that. Harry started to cheer. Could they? Of course they could! With characteristic impulsiveness he took charge of the affair.

"How much a ride?" he demanded.

Danny hesitated. "Oh, I thought maybe ten cents——"

"Ten cents it is," Harry cried. "That much is settled. Now, how many minutes would we keep them under? And how many passengers at each trip?"



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

Bob answered. "Only one," he said decisively. "We can watch one fellow. Take down two, and one of them would monkey with the machinery."

"All right," Harry answered regretfully. "One goes. If we took down two it would be twenty cents a trip, wouldn't it?"

Bob laughed. "No arguing, Harry. One passenger is plenty. How many minutes, Danny?"

"We ought to give them ten minutes for their ten cents," Danny said. "Ten minutes will seem a long time to them, because most of our passengers will be small boys, and they'll be scared under water."

"How many of the boats would we use?" Harry demanded. "One or both?"

"Both," Danny said.

"Thunder!" cried Harry. "If each boat gets four passengers an hour, together we'll make eight dollars a day—that is, if we work ten hours a day. That's forty-eight dollars



## THE CHUMS ENTER BUSINESS

a week. Before vacation ends we would have——”

“Sit on him, somebody,” Bob called.

Farrant performed the task. Harry grinned at them and told them they'd never be rich, because they had no imaginations. After a moment Farrant released him. He brushed his clothing and stared at Danny.

“When could we start?” he asked seriously.

“This is Thursday. We could start Monday, couldn't we?”

“Of course we could,” Harry agreed. He scratched his head. “How are we going to let people know that we're in business?”

“Advertise,” said Bob.

Harry blinked. “Thunder!” he said. “This is getting to be like a real company, isn't it?”

“It is a real company,” said Danny. “The Submarine Excursion Company. How is that for a name?”

How was it? It was every bit as good as



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

the idea. There would be no fishing or cruising to-day. There was work for them to do. They had to see that the Submarine Excursion Company, of which they were all stockholders and members, got off to a fine, healthy, running start.

“No more fooling,” Harry said. “I’m a captain of industry. Let’s go down and talk things over with Mr. Hinkelstedt.”



## CHAPTER II

### THE COMPANY CREEPS

THEY brought the *Gray Whale* and the *Little Giant* down to Mr. Hinkelstedt's float. They tied up the boats and descended on the workshop. The old builder, working on the refractory engine of a motor boat, dropped his tools, wiped his spectacles and stared at them.

"Well?" he demanded. "What now is in the wind?"

"We have formed a company," Harry said eagerly.

"For what? To make mischiefs?"

Harry grinned. "To make money," he said. "We're going to take passengers in the submarines."



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

Mr. Hinkelstedt did not try to conceal his interest. They told him the idea behind the Submarine Excursion Company.

"How about ten cents for ten minutes?" Danny Dugan demanded. "Is that too much?"

"It is very cheap," said the builder. "Down at Coney Island you would pay twenty-five cents to ride in a submarine."

"But how about the boats?" Danny insisted. "Are they all right? We want to look classy, you know."

Mr. Hinkelstedt went down to the end of the float and inspected the inside of the crafts.

"You can make many changes," he said. "You could paint the inside some dark color."

"Mahogany?" Danny asked.

"Mahogany, or walnut, or Flemish oak," the old builder answered. "Then you add varnish, and you paint white the woodwork. And when the candles are lighted she will look all polished up and nice inside."



## THE COMPANY CREEPS

Harry danced on one leg. "Yah!" he yelled. "There's style for you."

"And you could have a little cushioned seat for the passenger, maybe," Mr Hinkelstedt added.

Danny nodded thoughtfully. "Yes; we could get that."

"And some strong wires over the lookouts."

"What for?" Harry asked.

"So that your passenger will feel safe. He will not be always thinking what will happen if something hits the glass and breaks it and makes water come into the boat."

"I'll put wire on the *Gray Whale*," Bob said.

But Danny shook his head. "Not for mine. There isn't one chance in a million that anything will ever hit the glass. Besides, the wire might interfere with me seeing where I'm going."

That afternoon they took stock of how much money they could invest in the enter-



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

prise. They found, after pooling their fortunes, that they had four dollars and eighty cents.

"Will that be enough?" Harry asked anxiously.

"It will have to be enough," Danny answered.

They paraded off in a body and journeyed to the village general store. After much discussion they selected mahogany as the prevailing color. Instead of paint they economized and bought wood stain. Two half-gallon cans of prepared stain cost them one dollar and forty cents. There wasn't much trim, so a forty-cent can of white paint was thought to be enough. Varnish cost them eighty cents.

"How much have we spent?" Harry asked anxiously.

"Two-sixty," Danny told him. "We won't have to buy brushes. I have some home, and we can soak them in turpentine."

They paraded out of the store with their



## THE COMPANY CREEPS

purchases. They had decided that the submarines would leave on their trips from the float in front of Danny Dugan's house. Mr. Hinkelstedt's float was across the Creek, and had they wanted to use that as a base they would have had to ferry prospective customers across in a rowboat, and after the submarine trip ferry them back.

So they took the paint to the Dugan float. The *Gray Whale* and the *Little Giant* were brought across from Mr. Hinkelstedt's.

"Here," said Danny, "is half a gallon of wood stain. You fellows on the *Gray Whale* want to watch out and not use more than half the varnish or the white paint."

"Oh, we'll watch out," said Harry.

Danny stared at him. "Guess I'll divide the varnish and white before we start," he said thoughtfully.

That afternoon they cleaned all the woodwork inside the boats. At the end of the day Bob called a conference.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"The mahogany goes on to-morrow," he said. "This boat is in water, and the stain won't dry any too quickly. Then we must figure on a coat of varnish. If we have damp weather the varnish will be a long time drying out. How can we be sure that we'll start Monday?"

Here was a stumbling block that they had not foreseen. Finally Danny, with a shake of his head, said that they ought to postpone the opening until Wednesday.

Harry sighed. "All right," he said; "but we'll be losing money."

Next morning, when they assembled to begin their painting job, Bob had searched out another thought.

"How are we going to let people know that we're in business?" he demanded. "We can't tell everybody."

"We could advertise," Farrant said. He seldom took part in the deliberations. When he did so, what he said was right to the point.



## THE COMPANY CREEPS

"You said that day at the Cove that we would advertise."

"Real advertising?" Harry demanded. "Like the general store, and the fish market, and the dry goods store?"

Farrant nodded.

"In the *Herald*?" Harry asked. The *Herald* was the weekly newspaper of the village.

Once more Farrant nodded. Harry promptly pulled some note paper from his pocket.

"Who has a pencil? I can write a dandy ad."

But Bob said dryly that they'd let somebody at the *Herald* office write the advertisement. They dropped their paint brushes and journeyed into the business district of the village until they came to the newspaper office.

A young woman was in charge. They took off their caps and filed through the door.

"We want to advertise," said Danny.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"Is it a 'lost' ad?" the woman asked. "Something you have lost?"

"We want to advertise our business."

At that the woman stared at him in a surprised way. Harry took a copy of the *Herald* from her desk and turned to the dry goods store ad.

"We want about so much space," he said.

"For one issue?"

"Yes."

The woman was still more surprised. That will cost three dollars." What business had six boys, she wondered, that was worth three dollars of advertising.

But Harry had now dropped back in confusion. Three dollars was more money than the company possessed, and besides, it was more than he cared to spend even if they had their original four dollars and eighty cents. Danny Dugan went to the firing line.

"We can't spend more than one dollar," he explained.



## THE COMPANY CREEPS

The woman laid down her pencil. "What is it you want to advertise?" she asked.

They told her the story of the Submarine Excursion Company. At the finish of the tale the woman smiled slightly.

"I would use a business local," she advised.

"How much does that cost?" Harry asked.

"Fifty cents."

"And how many words?"

"Twenty-five."

The boys retired to a corner of the room. Harry, again insisting that only he could write a good ad, took charge. Fifteen minutes later he emerged with this result:

The chance of a lifetime. See the wonders of nature. Cruise in a submarine. Send the children. Ten cents a sail. Dugan's float, Creek road.

"How's that?" Harry asked triumphantly.

"It doesn't say when we start," Danny Dugan commented.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"And it doesn't give the name of the company," Bob added. "You must give the name of the company. It's business. How many words have you used?"

"Twenty-five," said Harry defiantly, "and you can't chop out a word without spoiling things."

"Maybe we could get extra words at two cents each," Farrant suggested.

The young woman said they could. Harry erased the last line, and wrote:

Daily after next Wednesday. Sub-  
marine Excursion Company, Dugan's  
float, Creek road.

They paid sixty-four cents and were assured that their advertisement would run in next day's issue. They had ninety-six cents left in their fund.

"That's a swell ad," Harry gurgled. "That ought to bring us all the business we can handle."



## THE COMPANY CREEPS

"Maybe," said Farrant.

That day the two boats got flowing coats of mahogany stain. Saturday morning the varnish was to go on. But first the boys had to get copies of the *Herald*. There, among other business locals was their ad.

Harry clipped the ad and stuck it in his pocket. He was quite proud of his achievement. Later he pulled Bob and Danny aside.

"Look here," he said uneasily. "This ad says 'Daily after next Wednesday.' We're not going to take passengers on Sundays, are we?"

"We are not," Bob answered.

"Well, how about that ad saying daily?"

They turned this over in their minds as they applied the varnish. At noon Danny suggested a plan.

"I have some old canvas," he said. "Suppose we wash out a piece, stretch it between two posts facing the road, and paint a notice on that."

"Great!" cried Harry. "I'll paint it."



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"Farrant will paint it," said Danny. "He can do pretty good lettering."

The sign, however, was not painted that day. Over Sunday the boys heard enough gossip to know that their ad had started a lot of talk. Monday they put on the white trim. After that dried they lighted the candles and surveyed their work.

The varnished mahogany sparkled with richness and color. The white trim showed up with bright cleanliness. While they were admiring, Danny came down to the boats with two small cushioned seats.

"Say," said Harry softly, "she's almost too pretty to let every Tom and Jerry ride in her, isn't she?"

"She isn't," said Farrant; "not at ten cents a ride."

Next day was Tuesday. During the morning Bob nailed screen wire to protect his lookouts, forward and aft. Danny Dugan still refused to protect his glass.



## THE COMPANY CREEPS

They washed out a square of canvas, going at the job with scrubbing brushes and with soap. Later they hung the stuff out in the sun to dry and bleach. And that afternoon they stretched the canvas and painted their sign.

Danny had spoken truly. Farrant could do good lettering. The sign grew under his brush until at last it was finished. And when they backed off a dozen feet this is what they saw:

THIS IS THE PLACE  
SHAKE HANDS WITH FATHER NEPTUNE  
SUBMARINE EXCURSION COMPANY  
DAILY EXCEPT SUNDAY  
10 CENTS A SAIL.

"If that doesn't fetch them," Harry said positively, "nothing will."

"I wonder—" said Bob. He paused and looked at Danny.

"Shoot!" said the captain of the *Little Giant*. "What is it?"



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"I wonder how it would go to set up our searchlight and play it on the sign? Everybody passing would see it. What's the use of having a sign that's useless half of every twenty-four hours?"

"No use," said Harry. "Shall we get the light, Danny?"

Danny nodded. "I'm going to sit out in the road to-night and watch it," he grinned.

"We'll all sit out," said Farrant.

They rowed a flat-bottom up to Shelter Cove, took the light, and brought it down. They rigged it up fifteen feet from the sign. Danny filled it with oil. After that they scattered to their homes for supper.

Shortly after dark they started the light. Its rays made the white canvas and the black lettering startlingly distinct in the night. They sat in the high grass by the creek and giggled when anybody stopped in the road. As almost everybody stopped, they were quite sure that they had made an advertising hit.



## THE COMPANY CREEPS

Not one of the boys slept well that night. All of them were out of bed long before their accustomed hours. Secretly five members of the company envied Danny. He lived right there. He could see each customer as he approached.

As Harry ate his breakfast he wondered how many ten-cent pieces the boats would take in that day. Sometimes he felt as though they were going to earn a lot of money, and at other times he had a fear that the venture would prove to be a failure.

He left the house quite uncertain as to what he would find. He met Perry, and they whistled outside Bob's house, and Bob came forth with his cap not yet set upon his head. A moment later they met Farrant.

"Fine day," said the boy. "I was afraid it would rain. We'd have done no business."

Harry felt abashed. That was like Farrant, wasn't it? The only one to think that the weather would affect business.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

They turned into a street that led directly to the creek road. Once they turned the next corner Danny's float would be directly before them. What would they find?

Unconsciously they slowed their steps as they came to the corner that would tell them of failure or success. Not a boy dared halt altogether. They kept on, ever slower. But even the slowest pace must eventually consume distance, and at last they came to the corner. They swung toward the float for a quick eager look. Nine small boys stood in line beside the canvas sign.

"Hurrah!" cried Harry. "There's ninety cents."



## CHAPTER III

### TWO VISITORS

**H**ARRY was mistaken, however, in his guess as to the amount of money the nine boys represented. Danny Dugan had lined them up on the principle of first come, first sail. Eight of the youngsters, when the time came to produce the price of a trip, held out ten-cent pieces. The ninth boy had no money. He had come, he said, to see Jimmy sink in a boat. Jimmy grinned with the contentment of a very small boy who is going to have an experience and doesn't care whether his chum has any money or not.

So the ninth boy was weeded out. He looked so envious as Jimmy disappeared into



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

the *Little Giant* that Harry was moved to take him aside.

"You wait here," he ordered. "Maybe you'll get a sail."

So the little chap waited. Harry swung himself into the *Gray Whale*.

"Come on," he called. "Who's first?"

A boy came forward. He went into the submarine bravely enough; but when the trap came down and shut out the daylight, he began to squirm.

"Go up forward," said Harry. "You'll see the water."

"Up here," Bob called from the lookout. "This way, sonny."

The boy went forward. He stood on the little bench, and his eyes were level with the lookout. The glass, only a few inches under water, made things visible.

"Sink her," Bob called.

Perry threw the lever. The boat lurched and began to go down. The water at the



## TWO VISITORS

lookout darkened. The little passenger clutched at Bob and clung to him.

"Are—are we under?" he asked.

"We're under," said Bob. "Watch now, and you'll see the water moving past the glass."

Some of the lad's fright passed at the calmness of this larger boy. He watched, and gradually he became interested and his fright died altogether. He began to have a fine time staring at the lighted candles, at the propeller machinery, at the general shipshape appearance of the craft.

Perry was timing. "Five minutes," he said.

Bob had brought the *Gray Whale* straight out from shore. He swung her around and started her back over the same route.

"Better look out here, sonny," he said. "We'll soon be going up to the surface."

The boy peered over his shoulder. After a while he heard a sound. He looked back to see pump handles being worked by Perry and by Harry.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"Watch!" called Bob. "Watch out this way."

The lad brought his attention around to the glass. He saw the water lose its darkness. Then suddenly the trap was thrown back, and the sunlight came in.

"That was fine, wasn't it?" he asked Bob.

Bob laughed and nodded. The *Gray Whale* was run alongside the float. The boy was helped out.

"How was it?" yelled the waiting line.

Then the *Little Giant* came in. She discharged a very much excited small passenger.

"How did your boy like it?" Bob called to Danny.

"He'll be talking about that trip for a month," Danny Dugan grinned.

Meanwhile, Harry had joined the little chap who had waited on the float. The little fellow's eyes were round with wonder. Had he seen the boats sink and come back? He had. Well, all he had to do was to tell every-



## TWO VISITORS

body he met how wonderful was the sight. Would he do that? Of course he would.

"All right," said Harry. "You go and tell everybody, and this afternoon we'll give you a ride."

"For nothing?" the boy demanded.

"For nothing," said Harry. As the youngster dashed off Harry muttered that there was another ten cents to be chalked up against advertising expenses.

At noon the submarines quit so that their crews could eat. One dollar and twenty cents had been earned.

Fifty cents more came into the treasury that afternoon. The small boy that Harry had turned into an advertising agent appeared about three o'clock. He said that he had told thousands and thousands of persons about the boats that sank. Danny remarked dryly that there weren't that many people in the village. Nevertheless, the small boy got his sail, and went whooping home to tell all about it.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

That evening Perry was elected treasurer. He said that he didn't know anything about bookkeeping.

"Shucks!" cried Harry. "When you pay out any money enter it on one page, and what we take in goes on another page. That's simple, isn't it?"

"Y—yes," Perry answered weakly.

"All right. Now on the spent page you mark like this: 'Paint, forty cents; varnish, eighty cents; stain, one dollar and forty cents; advertising, sixty-four cents.' That makes how much?"

"Three twenty-four," said Perry.

"There! You're a fine bookkeeper. Now on the other page you start like this: 'Cash on hand, one dollar and fifty-six cents; receipts, first day, one dollar and seventy cents.' See? We have three dollars and twenty-six already."

They separated that night with the understanding that everybody was to be out early



## TWO VISITORS

next day to handle the crowd. All six of the boys were enthusiastic. Harry whispered that this beat hanging around Shelter Cove.

"Maybe we'll make enough money so that I can buy racing ice skates," Farrant said hopefully.

But next day it drizzled all morning. In the afternoon the sun came out. Half a dozen youngsters came to the float, and the net result for the day was sixty cents. That night the company found that it had three dollars and eighty-six cents in the treasury.

Friday brought eighty cents. Much was expected of Saturday, but Saturday proved to be a big disappointment. It seemed that all the small boys went off to see the village baseball team play a match game. The Submarine Excursion Company took in but forty cents. The books of Treasurer Perry showed a balance on hand of five dollars and six cents.

Harry was frankly disappointed. Over Sunday he moped. But Monday morning he



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

had an inspiration, and instead of going down to the float, he went to the village playground. Mr. Young was the director, and Harry invited him to sail in the *Gray Whale*.

"Could you go now?" the boy asked.

"I could go at noon," said the man. "I have heard much talk about the boats."

"Noon it is then," said Harry. "I'll be waiting for you."

Secretly Mr. Young wondered what was behind the invitation. He kept the appointment. Harry, while Perry and Bob looked on in perplexity, explained the workings of the craft. Finally he nodded to Bob, and Bob gave the order to sink her. She went down gently. Mr. Young walked forward to the lookout.

Twenty minutes later they had him on the surface. "Like it?" Harry asked.

The man nodded. "It is quite wonderful for boys," he said. "Do you think it is safe?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Well, then—" Harry coughed and wet



## TWO VISITORS

his lips. "Well, then, would you tell the boys at the playground that—that——"

Mr. Young laughed. So that was the reason he had been invited.

"Of course I'll tell them," he said. "You'll be a captain of industry some day, young man."

"I don't doubt it," Harry said modestly. "Thank you, Mr. Young."

After the director had departed, Bob and Perry fell upon their companion of the *Gray Whale*. Why hadn't he told them?

"Not much," said Harry wisely. "If the thing fell through I wasn't going to have anybody laughing at me. Say, there'll be a whole raft of kids here to-morrow."

Whatever the business might be next day, it was mighty poor to-day. Twenty cents had been the result of the morning's work. When two hours of the afternoon passed without any more money in sight, Farrant suggested that they go fishing. They backed away



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

from the float, swung the noses of the boats around, and headed for the upwaters of the Creek.

Bass End proved to be a healthy fishing place even in the middle of the day. Harry said wisely that this was the wrong time to fish and that they wouldn't get anything, but they did boat five bass. These were taken to Shelter Cove. They had not been near the place for almost a week, and it looked rusty. But they soon had a fire going, and after a time the fish began to sizzle in the pan. For a while they forgot the excursion business entirely. Then Perry announced that they had five dollars and twenty-six cents in the treasury, and Harry made a wry face.

"Oh, well," he said, "to-morrow ought to spin the wheels again."

True enough, next day there was a mild rush. At the end of the afternoon one dollar and twenty cents was turned over to Perry. They had now passed the six-dollar mark.



## TWO VISITORS

Wednesday saw another falling off, and Thursday was so poor that they quit work early and went fishing again. Danny Dugan and the crew of the *Little Giant*, elected to try for bass, but Harry and the *Gray Whale* went after crabs. Both were successful, with the result that there was a feast later at Shelter Cove. Perry announced that they had seven dollars and fifty-six cents.

"That's too much money," Danny Dugan objected. "What's the use of having it lying around and doing nothing?"

"What can we buy?" Harry asked.

Danny didn't know. But something ought to be bought, he insisted. Finally Perry suggested that they buy a small mirror, and some soap and towels.

"We never get a chance to wash up when we leave here," he complained. "I don't like to go home with a dirty face and my hair running wild."

So it was decided that one dollar should be



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

invested on behalf of cleanliness. The fund was reduced to six dollars and fifty-six cents.

Next day was Friday. There was no rain during the morning, but the sky was threatening, and not a boy appeared to shake hands with Father Neptune. Along about eleven o'clock two forms came within sight of the float.

"Hello!" cried Danny Dugan. "I wonder what these chaps want?"

Harry stared. "One has a crutch. Know them, Danny?"

"I know of them. They're 'Sling' Duffy and Tommy Mason. Mason's the fellow with one leg. Duffy is called 'Sling' because he throws stones at everybody he quarrels with. They're bad eggs. Been in trouble two or three times."

"Where do they live?" Harry asked.

"Over at Big Meadow."

Big Meadow was the next town—a quiet, sleepy, peaceful country hamlet.



## TWO VISITORS

"Well," said Harry, "they can't want anything to do with us."

But the two older boys came directly across the float, Mason stumping along in the lead. He paused a few feet off and whispered to Duffy.

"You kids want to make a dollar?" he demanded suddenly.

"How?" asked Danny Dugan.

"Take us out in those boats. We'll pay fifty cents each."

"I—I don't know," Danny hesitated.

"Well," cried Mason, "find out. I don't want to stay here all day."

The six boys put their heads together. Perry wanted nothing to do with the strangers. But Harry did not want to lose that dollar.

"They can't cut up any monkey shines," he argued. "We have three to their one. Take them on."

Harry prevailed. Mason and his crutch



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

were helped into the *Gray Whale*. Duffy went aboard the *Little Giant*.

"No sinking," he said. "Just take us up the creek. We want a sail. Don't we, Tom?"

"That's what," said Mason.

The two boats kept as close together as they dared. For all that the strangers said that they only wanted a sail, they kept a mighty sharp watch on the Creek. They asked innumerable questions about tide and currents. The submarines passed Bass End and continued up the Creek.

"I guess this is far enough," said Duffy. "Swing around and let them drift."

"We'll run aground," Danny Dugan protested.

"You can start the engines if you get in too close," Duffy cried. "Come on, now. No nonsense. I'm paying a dollar for this trip and I say let her drift."

"You haven't paid anything yet," said Danny. He saw that Farrant and Davis, his



## TWO VISITORS

crew, were ready for trouble. He felt a new courage to find that they were prepared to stand by him.

Duffy handed over a one dollar bill. "Now drift," he said.

So both the *Gray Whale* and the *Little Giant* were given to the current. Both boats swung in close to shore as they passed Bass End.

"See that?" Duffy called.

"I see," said Mason. He seemed mighty well pleased about something. "How is the water here?" he asked Bob. "Salt or fresh?"

"Pretty well fresh," Bob answered; "sort of brackish."

"How's the fishing here?"

Bob hesitated. "Fair," he said.

The one-legged boy peered sharply at him. "Fair, eh? What runs there? Bass?"

"Some," answered the admiral of the submarine fleet. Mason laughed and leaned harder on his crutch.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

They came back at last to the float. There the visitors climbed out, and the crews of the submarines were not sorry to see them go.

Harry walked with them out to the road. He wanted to make sure that Tommy Mason did not take a notion to stick his crutch through their canvas sign. When the strangers from Big Meadow were gone he came hurrying back.

"Mighty funny," Harry said. "They laughed a lot."

"About what?" Bob asked.

"About what you told them—that the fishing was only fair at Bass End. Think they'll come over to fish there?"

Bob shook his head uneasily. "I guess not. Why would they come all the way from Big Meadow to get five or six bass?"

"Well," said Harry, "this trip of theirs is something about fishing. I heard them say 'suckers.' We have no suckers in Little Giant Creek, have we?"



## TWO VISITORS

Bob shook his head.

"Maybe," said Danny; "maybe we're the suckers they're after."

That thought was alarming. Even the fact that four little chaps appeared for rides and that the total receipts of the day were one dollar and forty cents did not entirely dispel the gloom. The Submarine Excursion Company wanted no trouble with fellows like Duffy or Mason.



## CHAPTER IV

### A VISIT TO GREAT MEADOW.

**B**Y next morning, however, much of their fear had passed. What harm, they asked themselves, could any fellows do them? They plunged with renewed energy into the work of digging up traffic for the Submarine Excursion Company.

Their efforts did not bring much in the way of results. They had figured that Saturdays would be their big days, but for the second time they were disappointed. Again the small boys of the village went off to a baseball game, and the net result of the day was forty cents. They now had seven dollars and thirty-six cents.

Monday saw a distinct falling off. Thirty



## A VISIT TO GREAT MEADOW

cents was earned. Tuesday only two boys appeared with the necessary fare. That evening Harry insisted on a conference.

"Fifty cents in two days," he complained. "It doesn't pay to hang around this float for that. We're missing a lot of good fishing and a lot of good times at Shelter Cove. Something must be done."

"Why," Danny said thoughtfully, "why can't we run only during certain hours of the day?"

Harry whistled. "That sounds good. Out with it, Danny."

"Well," said the captain of the *Little Giant*, "why can't we operate from two to four o'clock each afternoon except Mondays?"

"Why not Mondays?" Bob demanded.

"That's the day the kids should get ten cents without much trouble," Danny explained wisely. "Their fathers get paid on Saturday. That ought to make Monday the best day."

"What would be the Monday hours?"



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"From one to six o'clock. How about that?"

"Look here," Harry argued, "if the fathers get paid on Saturday, shouldn't Saturday be our best day?"

"It isn't," Danny answered. "The kids won't pay ten cents to ride with us when they can see a baseball game for nothing. Monday from one to six and the other days from two to four. Yes?"

One by one they agreed. Farrant went off for paint and a brush.

"I'll change that canvas sign," he said.

Next morning they went off to the cove with a clear conscience. They cleaned up around the shack, syckled the weeds that had come too close and washed their tin plates, their knives and forks and their cook pots.

"Now," said Harry, "for some bass. Who's with me?"

They all were with him. The submarines were run out through the cove inlet into the



## A VISIT TO GREAT MEADOW

sunlit Creek. Then up creek the boys went, laughing and singing, until they reached Bass End.

Half an hour later Harry, from the *Gray Whale*, looked over at the *Little Giant*.

"Catching anything?" he asked.

"Two," Danny called.

"One here," Harry grumbled. "Poor, isn't it?"

It was the worst fishing they had yet had at the spot. After another half hour they decided that the chances for a bass dinner were decidedly slim. They came in close to the reeds, scalped more killies and went farther down for crabs.

That afternoon three boys came out to ride under water.

"Getting worse and worse," said Harry. "I can see this company going out of business pretty soon."

Next day they went to Bass End again, fished for two hours and secured four fish.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"Guess we'll have to crab," Danny said at last.

"No crabbing for me," Harry protested. "Something is wrong here. I want to figure this thing out. The bass couldn't have left the Creek. What's happening to them?"

Danny didn't know. Neither did the others. The bass weren't biting. That much was certain.

"Maybe we're not using the proper bait," Bob suggested.

"All right," Harry said. "To-morrow we'll use about everything on the calendar."

So next morning he appeared with a variety of worms and an artificial frog as well. To make the test thorough Bob had brought a few of his father's trout flies. Farrant had some grubs that he had found in the decayed trunk of a tree.

"If this doesn't fetch them," Danny said wisely, "there's no bass here."

Harry started with the artificial frog. 'A'



## A VISIT TO GREAT MEADOW

half hour passed without a strike. Farrant tried his grubs with no success. Bob's gaudy flies brought nothing. An hour later Harry reeled in his line and quit.

"Something has happened here," he said. "And what that something is I'm going to find out."

They brought the submarines back to Shelter Cove. Danny, with his head in his hands, stared long and thoughtfully across the cove.

"I can't figure out where anything could have happened," he said at length. "I've heard old fishermen say that there are times no fish will bite. Maybe this is one of those times."

"Bosh!" said Harry. "Something has happened, I tell you."

"But what?"

"How do I know? We'll have to watch and see."

Farrant, the practical, asked a straight to the point question. "What will we watch?"



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

Harry didn't know. What could you watch when you didn't know what was wrong?

They went to the Dugan float early in the afternoon and prepared for business. But to-day not a boy with ten cents came near them. Two boys appeared who had five cents, and there were several with two cents and three cents. After they had departed Bob remarked that twenty-two cents had gotten away from them.

"And it shouldn't have got away," remarked Frank Smith, one of the *Little Giant* crew.

Smith was a boy even more given to silence than Farrant. Now Danny looked at him thoughtfully.

"Why not, Frank?"

Smith, instead of answering, asked a question. "We charge ten cents for a ride, don't we?"

"Yes."

"And we stay down ten minutes. That's a



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cent a minute. Now, if a kid shows up with only five cents, what's the use of letting that five cents get away from us? Take him down for five cents. Let's do away with this ten cents a ride. Let's charge a cent a minute."

"But," Harry objected, "then the chap who has ten cents will take an eight cent ride and go away with two cents for candy."

"That won't happen often," Smith said stubbornly. "Anyway, we lost twenty-two cents to-day, and if we lose that much every day we're out almost six dollars a month."

That was a new way of looking at the matter. They agreed, after much thought, that the ten cents a sail price would have to go. Starting with to-morrow the price would be one cent a minute.

Thursday and Friday the new scale worked very well. They took down eight boys for five minutes each, and nine passengers for three-minute trips. Ten boys went down for two minutes. A few very small chaps had



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

pennies, but right there Harry balked. What was the use of selling a minute under water when it took three minutes to raise and lower the submarines?

“Harry’s right this time,” said Bob. “Tell those little chaps to wait until they save another penny or two.”

Friday night Perry reported nine dollars and eighty-seven cents in the treasury.

Meanwhile the boys had tried for bass each day. They had caught three. From all parts of the Creek complaint was growing. The best fishermen in the village came home with empty hands. There was a belief that something was being emptied into the Creek that was poisoning the fish.

Harry heard this talk. “There!” he cried triumphantly. “Didn’t I tell you something was wrong?”

Danny shook his head. “I don’t take any stock in this stuff about poisoned water. Where would the poison come from? The



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paper mills don't dump their waste into the Big Giant any more. That's why the bass were put in the Creek."

"Well," grumbled Harry, "you can't tell me that something isn't wrong."

Saturday promised to be another poor day for business. Danny turned the *Little Giant* over to Farrant and to Davis and went to Great Meadow on an errand for his father.

"Watch out for 'Sling' Duffy and Tommy Mason," Bob warned.

"Shucks!" said Danny. "What would they do to me?"

"Maybe they'd try to make you give them back their dollar," Harry said wisely.

At that Danny Dugan grinned. "Fat chance they'd have to get a dollar out of me. Well, don't wreck the *Little Giant* while I'm gone."

Saturday proved to be a listless time for the Submarine Excursion Company. They sold two four-minute rides and one three-minute



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

ride. Even among the smallest of their customers the novelty of riding in a submarine boat was wearing off.

"I can see where this company hits the rocks pretty soon," Harry said gloomily.

"This thing couldn't last forever," Perry answered sensibly. "Anyhow, we've had our fun, and we have over ten dollars in the treasury, and we spent one dollar for the mirror and soap and towels."

"Harry wants excitement all the time," Farrant smiled.

Harry nodded. "Not excitement, but something doing."

"Maybe you'll get it," said Bob quietly. "Here comes Danny Dugan on the run."

The captain of the *Little Giant* was gasping when he reached the boats.

"Guess what I saw in Great Meadow?" he cried breathlessly.

Bob shook his head. "Don't know, Danny, but it stirred you up."



## A VISIT TO GREAT MEADOW

"You bet it did. I saw bass."

Harry jumped up. "Our bass?"

"Bass from Little Giant Creek. They were in a butcher shop. Thirty of them."

"Thirty?" cried Farrant in amazement. "Where did the butcher get thirty?"

"He gets that many every day," Danny explained. "He had a sign in the window 'Fresh bass every day.' He says he gets thirty or forty every morning."

"How do you know?"

"I went in and talked to him. He told me they come from Little Giant Creek."

Harry whistled. "He must be some fisherman."

"He doesn't fish for them. He buys them."

"Who does he buy them from?" Harry demanded.

"From 'Sling' Duffy," Danny Dugan answered.

And at that a startled silence fell over the group. After a time Bob asked:



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

“Any of you seen Duffy or Tommy Mason fishing in the Creek?”

One by one they shook their heads.

“Then how does Duffy get thirty and forty bass a day?”

“That,” said Harry, “is what this crowd must find out. And when we do find out we’ll come pretty close to knowing what it is that has put our bass fishing on the fritz.”



## CHAPTER V

### A FLASH OF LIGHT

**B**UT though the chums racked their brains for several days they thought out nothing that even resembled a solution of the mystery. And while they thought and thought business grew steadily worse for the Submarine Excursion Company. The total earnings for four days were seventy cents. Perry reported that they had just squeezed past the eleven dollar mark.

Harry returned to his grumbling. What was the use, he asked, of going on in this fashion? Why not quit? They had eleven dollars. Why not go back to Shelter Cove and get some fun out of life? They could spend what money was in the treasury, buy some



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camping things and have a whale of a time.

"Suppose we keep on with our Monday excursions and drop everything else?" Danny asked.

So they arranged the matter in that fashion.

They bought a pan for frying griddle cakes. Then Farrant found a man who wanted to sell a second-hand phonograph and a big box of records for seven dollars. That afternoon the boys held an excited meeting, and from the conference Farrant emerged with the money necessary to make the purchase. Next day rowboats that plowed up and down Little Giant Creek saw the smoke of a fire arising from Shelter Cove and heard the sound of a squeaky phonograph grinding forth its music. To the boys, however, that phonograph was perfect.

They had more than three dollars left in the treasury. They bought additional mosquito wire and nailed it over the two windows of the shack. They succeeded, after much la-



## A FLASH OF LIGHT

bor, in building a screened door. This was swung into place.

"Now," said Harry, "we're as cosy as a frog in a pond."

Even Monday proved to be a bad day for them. Though it was the only day that the Submarine Excursion Company gave to commerce, the returns were meager. Forty cents came to the purse of the company.

"Let's cut the whole game," Harry argued. "Forty cents for five hours. Huh!"

"We'll wait and see how next Monday turns out," Danny Dugan decreed.

During that week they reached the Cove each morning before nine o'clock. One of their phonograph records was "The Star-Spangled Banner." Every morning on the stroke of nine the flag went up, and as Farrant pulled the halyards Harry started the phonograph. From the horn came the splendid, measured music of: "Oh, say, can you see by the dawn's early light——"



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

Somehow, the ceremony never grew stale. Each morning the boys felt their spines stiffen.

But after the ceremony of flag raising was over they went at their play with a relish. From morning until night they cruised back and forth over the waters of the Creek. Every strange boat they saw was investigated. They fished, too, but with sorry success. The bass continued to be scarce.

Though they did not mention "Sling" Duffy or Tommy Mason the crew knew that Bob and Danny kept the submarines cruising to see if either of these two boys appeared. But at no time did they see the lads from Great Meadow. Yet there was the fact that a Great Meadow butcher shop was receiving daily a load of bass, and the further fact that the bass fishing in the Creek had been spoiled.

"Look here," Harry said after they had kept up this cruising about for almost a week, "we haven't seen either 'Sling' or Mason. How do



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we know that the butcher is still getting bass from them?"

Danny nodded slowly. "I hadn't thought of that. Suppose I go to Great Meadow tomorrow?"

They decided that he should go. Perry, as treasurer, was ordered to advance his fare.

Next morning Danny set forth. He returned shortly after noon. He dropped down alongside the hatch of the *Gray Whale* and fanned himself with his cap.

"How they get them," he said, "is too much for me."

Harry straightened up. "You mean that butcher had bass?"

"He surely had—about fifteen pounds. He said he gets them every day."

"From 'Sling' Duffy?"

"Yes."

Harry slumped down in his seat. "How does Duffy get them?" he said helplessly.

That was the question. How *did* Duffy



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get them? They never saw him on the Creek.

"Oh, rats!" Perry cried. "I'll bet he doesn't get them from the Creek at all. He gets them some place else and says they're from the Little Giant so that he can sell them."

"Then how do you account for bass fishing in the Creek going to smash?" Bob asked quietly.

Perry gave up. The question was too big for him.

"The only thing I can see to do," Danny Dugan told them, "is to keep up our watch. If Duffy or Mason are about on the Creek sooner or later we'll find them."

"But I don't want to sit back and lose good fishing," Harry cried. "I want to get at the bottom of this."

Danny grinned. "All right, go ahead. Where will you start?"

"I'll start by watching," Harry grumbled, "just the same as the rest of you."

Monday came again, and brought them



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thirty cents. After the day was ended they stood awkwardly about the Dugan float. Perry jingled the thirty cents in the palm of one hand. Submarine excursions only one day a week, and only thirty cents at that!

"I move we break up the company and go out of business," Harry said in a discouraged tone.

"Here!" cried Farrant.

"Second the motion," cried Davis.

But Danny Dugan was not yet ready to quit. "Let's try it another way," he urged.

Harry grunted. "And sit around here idle for hours?"

"We won't have to sit around idle at all. We won't carry passengers at ten cents a ride. We'll charter the boats for parties. They'll have to engage us in advance. Then we'll know just what engagements we have, and we won't waste time loafing around for something to turn up. How does that strike you?"



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"How much for each party?" Harry asked cautiously.

"Twenty-five cents a person."

Harry's face fell. "Shucks! They won't pay that."

Danny grinned. "Won't they? Just take another think. This won't be kid parties. Suppose six or eight men and women want to go some place some evening. They charter our two boats. We give them a submarine ride at night——"

"Not for mine," Perry cut in quickly.

"Oh, wait until you hear me out," Danny cried impatiently. "When the *Gray Whale* goes down the *Little Giant* follows in her wake and sees to it that she steers a correct course. Suppose the *Gray Whale* is under. I'm in the *Little Giant* on the surface. I keep calling down the ventilators 'Port' or 'Starboard,' and Bob steers her accordingly. After he comes up I go down and he directs me. How's that?"



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That was a whole lot better.

"And you think you can get a quarter a passenger?" Harry demanded.

"All of that," Danny answered.

Harry gave a yell. "All right, Danny; I take back what I said. The Submarine Excursion Company is still in the ring."

Once more Farrant reconstructed the sign. This time it read:

SUBMARINE BOATS TO CHARTER  
FOR PRIVATE PARTIES  
DAY OR NIGHT  
TWENTY-FIVE CENTS A PERSON  
SUBMARINE EXCURSION CO.

"It doesn't say 'Dugan's float,'" Harry commented.

"Doesn't have to," said Danny. "Everybody knows by this time where to find Dugan's float."

Farrant grinned. "We've made Dugan's float famous," he said.

They went back to their patient game of



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

watching the Creek for Duffy or Mason. Once more, however, they were disappointed. These boys did not put in an appearance. And the bass continued to be shy of the hook.

However, they were getting some fun out of life as they went along. They had learned the knack of soaking fresh corn in water, of tying its husk and then of roasting it in a bed of hot coals. And Davis had developed into a griddle cake maker well worthy of praise. Then, too, they had crabs and catfish. But all the crabs and catfish in the Creek could not make up to them for the fact that Bass End was no longer a spot dear to their hearts.

Three or four days passed and brought no private parties to the Submarine Excursion Company. Danny began to have a feeling that perhaps he had overreached himself in asking twenty-five cents a person. But on the fifth day, as they came back to the float from Shelter Cove, they found a young man impatiently pacing back and forth near the sign.



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He came down to the water's edge and stared long and curiously at both the *Gray Whale* and the *Little Giant*.

"Are those the submarines?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," Bob answered.

"Would you mind sinking one? I want to see how it works."

Harry was a practical chap.

"Are you just curious to see the boat work," he asked, "or are you a pro—pro——"

"Prospective?" Danny whispered.

Harry nodded. "Yes, that's it. Prospective. Or are you a prospective customer?"

The man gave a ghost of a smile. "I am a prospective customer," he said.

So, without any more fuss and feathers, Bob, Harry and Perry sank the *Gray Whale*. They circled her under water. The young man on the float watched her ventilators as they moved along the surface. When she came to the top again he nodded his head as though satisfied.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"Can you take a party of six?" he asked.

Could they? Of course they could.

"What night have you open?" the young man asked.

Danny was about to say any night. But Harry took a memorandum book from his pocket and pretended to study it.

"What night do you want?" he asked.

Danny and Bob gasped. Thunder! Harry was pretending they had a whole raft of engagements made already.

"Could I have Thursday night?"

Harry stared at the book. "Thursday," he said thoughtfully. "All right; we'll make it Thursday."

"What time?" the young man asked.  
"Eight o'clock?"

"From eight to ten o'clock," Harry answered. "And—and would you mind leaving a deposit?"

Harry and Bob gasped again. But the young man asked how much, and Harry said



## A FLASH OF LIGHT

calmly that fifty cents would be enough. The young man handed over half a dollar.

"Perry," Harry ordered breezily, "give the gentleman a receipt."

"We have no receipts," Perry blundered.

But Harry was equal to the emergency. "Haven't they come from the printer yet? Oh, well, make one out. I guess Mr.—Mr.——"

"Mr. Franklin," said the young man.

"Thank you," said Harry. "I guess Mr. Franklin will not mind a written receipt."

Mr. Franklin said he wouldn't. Luckily Perry knew how to write a receipt. After the young man had departed Harry gave a sigh of relief.

"That was touch and go for a while," he grinned. "How did I manage it?"

"You are the fiercest liar I ever met," said Danny.

"Oh, shucks!" Harry waved his hands airily. "That wasn't a fib that hurt anybody,



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

was it? I have no use for an out-and-out liar. That—that was just artistic.”

“And then some,” said Perry dryly. “How about receipts? Are we really going to have some printed?”

“You can buy a whole pad of them for a quarter,” Harry informed them.

“All right,” Bob ordered; “buy some. There’s no knowing what Harry will tell the next time if we don’t buy him some receipts.”

Thursday was a busy day for the boys.

“It’s this way,” Danny explained. “This is our first private party. If we please this party we’ll get others, because these people will talk about the good time they had.”

“How will we place them?” Farrant asked. “Three in a boat?”

“Three in a boat,” Danny nodded.

“Well,” Farrant observed, “we don’t want to fill the tank entirely with water when we go under. If we do the weight of these people



## A FLASH OF LIGHT

will put us under further than we want to go. We'll have to regulate that."

They wiped down the woodwork. The candle glasses were polished. Machinery was overhauled and cleaned. When supper time came the boys were sure that their boats were as sweet and as bright as they could be.

They were back on the float at seven thirty o'clock. Shortly before eight o'clock Mr. Franklin appeared. With him were another young man, two young women and an elderly couple, possibly the parents of the young women.

Mr. Franklin, a young woman and the elderly man entered the *Gray Whale*. The others boarded the *Little Giant*. The boats backed away from the float and turned their noses upstream.

A brilliant moon lighted the waters of the Creek. Gently the submarines plugged their way along. Danny and Bob explained how the boats were worked. The passengers



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

seemed vastly interested. The boats turned the bend and kept on toward Shelter Cove. They passed this and approached Bass End.

"Wonderful!" said one of the young women.

"I will go under as soon as you are ready," Bob announced.

At that there was a flurry in the *Gray Whale*. The young woman's face paled a bit, and Mr. Franklin looked concerned.

"We—we are ready now," he said hesitatingly. "Are we not, Edith?"

"Y-yes," said the young woman.

The elderly man asked but one question. He spoke to Bob. "Is this thing safe, young man?"

"We go down in it every day," Bob answered.

"I'm ready," said the man.

Harry called back to the *Little Giant*, "We're going down." Danny brought his boat up close to the flagship.



## A FLASH OF LIGHT

"I'll stand by," he reported.

Harry clapped down the hatch. The young woman gave a little gasp. They were pretty well crowded. Perry pulled the lever that flooded the tank—pulled it not wholly open, but about one-quarter.

"Easy," came Danny's voice down the ventilators. He would see that they did not go down too deep. "Shut off," he called after an interval.

Perry closed the intakes that flooded the tank. The *Gray Whale*, her propeller turning, forged ahead under water.

"Are we really moving?" asked the young woman.

"About three miles an hour," Bob answered.

The young woman gave a cry. "But if we should hit something——"

"Port!" came a voice down the ventilator. Bob turned the steering wheel. "That's our pilot calling down to us," he smiled.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP.

Mr. Franklin whistled. "You boys don't forget much, do you?"

"Not much," Harry answered modestly.

This voyage was strange even to the boys, who were used to the craft. Six persons stuck in that little hold gave a feeling of chokiness. And the boat, too, had a habit of rolling that wasn't wholly pleasant.

"Port!" came Danny's voice again.

"This is quite an adventure," said the young woman. "I like it ever so much. But—but don't you think we could go up?"

"Certainly," said Bob. Then: "Pumps!" he ordered.

Harry and Perry worked the handles of the pump. It was hard going, for they were squeezed almost up against one another. But by dint of much puffing they finally got her to the surface. They threw back the hatch.

"Why," cried the young woman, "we were away down there when we sank. See how far we traveled!"



## A FLASH OF LIGHT

The ease with which the *Gray Whale* had performed had calmed the passengers of the *Little Giant*. Danny sunk her, and now Bob's boat became pilot. The *Little Giant* was down a long time. Bob, following at her keel, suddenly had to shift his rudder to prevent running into her aft ventilator.

"Any trouble?" he called.

Danny's voice came up through the ventilator. "Engine broke down."

"Oh!" cried Mr. Franklin. "What about this? They're caught down there."

"They're all right," Bob answered. "They pump up by hand power, the same as we do. See, she's coming up now."

Slowly the *Little Giant* came up, first more and more of her ventilators, then the top of her hatch, then her body. Finally she was thrown open.

"We had a bigger adventure than you," cried the second young woman. "We broke down under water and you didn't."



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

Bob felt a load taken from his mind. He had feared that this breakdown would frighten the passengers of the *Little Giant* and right at the start give these excursions a bad reputation. Instead, the *Little Giant's* passengers were enthusiastic.

"We must get up another of these parties some time," said Mr. Franklin with enthusiasm.

Danny and Farrant and Davis tinkered with their machinery, but the propeller did not turn one inch. Finally Danny threw Bob a line. The *Gray Whale* tried to tow her companion. But the current was against her and, though she held her own, she made no headway.

"I'm sorry," Bob explained, "but we won't be able to get you back at ten o'clock. The tide is against us. We'll have to wait until it starts to run out."

"When will that be?" Mr. Franklin asked.

"It is now nine o'clock," Bob told him.



## A FLASH OF LIGHT

"The tide will be at the flood at about ten. As soon as she starts to flow out we'll have a combination of tide and our engine. We'll make speed, sir."

The young man laughed. "Don't hurry for me. I'm enjoying myself."

The tide came to the flood. They waited, and while they waited the passengers broke into song. Bob thought he never had heard better singing. Slowly, after a time, the *Gray Whale* started to forge ahead.

"Here we go," cried Danny.

"And none too soon," whispered Harry to Bob. "Look at that storm coming."

A high bank of black clouds was coming rapidly across the sky. Abruptly the moon was shut off and the Creek became dark. They heard the rumble of thunder. The singing stopped.

"How is she in a storm?" Mr. Franklin asked.

"This boat is good in any kind of weather,"



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

Harry answered. "The worse you'll get is a wetting."

They were in the channel now, and that had the full strength of the outgoing tide. The *Gray Whale*, even though loaded with the *Little Giant*, moved a bit sluggishly. The thunder rumbles grew plainer.

And then, for a spell, the thunder ceased. Harry stuck his head up through the hatch. How did the Creek look, he wondered. Suddenly he cocked his head sideways. He appeared to be listening.

"Sound of oars on the starboard bow," he called softly to Bob.

It was just a play on Harry's part to impress the passengers. But Bob, thinking that perhaps it might be a rowboat trying to reach shelter before the storm broke, turned the wheel over to Perry. It would be no extra struggle to tow a rowboat along with the *Little Giant*, he thought. He went to the hatch and joined Harry.



## A FLASH OF LIGHT

"Where?" he asked.

"Bass End—right over there," Harry answered.

Bob made a trumpet of his hands. He was prepared to shout to those unknown voyagers on the Creek. But the shout did not come. For at that moment a broad, white light flashed over there across the water and went out. The light had flashed on a face, and Bob was sure that the face was that of "Sling" Duffy.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE DISCOVERY

HARRY'S head had been turned away and he had not seen the light. Bob went forward to the wheel. He was thinking rapidly. What should he do? Tell the others? Anyway, he couldn't tell them now, for they would show excitement, and that would not do with passengers aboard.

The thunder rumbled again. The *Gray Whale* rounded the bend and started on the last leg of her run to the float. Neatly and deftly they ran alongside. Harry, poised on the sloping deck, leaped to the float. Bob tossed him a rope. Another moment the boats were secured and the passengers came ashore.

There was a mighty scurrying then to es-



## THE DISCOVERY

cape the rain. Mr. Franklin paid Harry another dollar. Soon the party that had left on its excursion so gayly was out the creek road and running for home, and the boys were alone on the float.

Hurriedly they started to spread canvas so that the rain would not flood the boats. Big drops began to fall just as they finished the work. They raced for the shelter of Danny Dugan's front porch. As they sat there, listening to the rain on the tin roof, Danny said quietly:

"How many of you noticed that flash of light on the Creek?"

"I did," said Bob.

Harry looked from one to the other. "Flash of light? What flash of light? Where?"

"At Bass End," Bob answered. "That time you called me."

"But I saw no flash of light."

"You were looking the other way."

"What sort of light?" Harry insisted.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"It looked like a pocket electric flash light to me," Bob told him. "How about that, Danny?"

Danny nodded. "That's how it seemed to me, too."

Farrant smelled a mystery. "Did you fellows see anything else?" he asked.

"I did," said Bob.

"I did," said Danny.

"They're going to make a secret of it," Harry grumbled.

"Not much," Danny cried. "When that light flashed it shone right into 'Sling' Duffy's face."

Harry whirled around. "Did it, Bob?"

Bob nodded.

"Good night!" Perry said softly. "Then he is catching bass, isn't he?"

"Who ever heard of catching thirty and forty bass a night?" Danny demanded.

None of the boys had ever heard of such a thing. In fact, they understood that it was



## THE DISCOVERY

practically impossible to hook the fish at night.

"Well," Perry demanded, "if he wasn't fishing what was he doing?"

"I don't know," Danny answered honestly. "And I think that Tommy Mason was with him. However, it's a sure bet that they weren't out there for their health. Remember the day we took them around? Remember how Bob was questioned about whether the fishing was good at Bass End?"

"I remember that," said Bob.

"Well, now we see them at Bass End late at night. I'm going up there bright and early to-morrow and see what's up."

The storm had passed as suddenly as it had come up. Leaving Danny, the other boys walked home, whispering on their way. "'Sling' Duffy and Tommy Mason out on Little Giant Creek during a thunderstorm?"

"Think they went to steal the *Gray Whale* or the *Little Giant*?" Perry asked.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"Shucks!" Harry grunted impatiently. "If they wanted to get our boats what would they be doing up at Bass End?"

"Well, we'll see what Danny finds to-morrow morning," Bob told them.

Next morning, when they arrived at the float, Danny had the canvas covers off the hatches. The woodwork had been wiped down and he was putting a fresh coat of paint on the fore and aft flagstaffs. He put down the brush.

"Nothing," he said. "Wasn't a thing there."

"What time did you get there?" Bob asked.

"About half past seven."

"Where did you look?"

"All around. Above the End, below it—all around."

"But, look here," cried Harry. "What were you looking for? What did you expect to find?"

"How did I know what I would find?"



## THE DISCOVERY

Danny answered hotly. "I knew that our bass had gone and that these fellows were getting them."

After that the captain of the *Little Giant* picked up his brush and worked away in silence. Later Perry said hesitatingly:

"Maybe—maybe Duffy being there was just an accident."

"Maybe," said Bob. "Come on. If we don't hustle for the cove we won't be in time for flag raising."

They did nothing that day but mope about in a listless fashion. They were all thinking more or less of what Perry had said. Perhaps it was an accident that "Sling" Duffy had been on the creek. But why had they never seen him before?

Harry's restless mind chafed at the day's dreariness.

"I have an idea," he said. "Suppose we buy soft mosquito netting, build a frame of one-inch lumber, string the netting over it and



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

put a long table and chairs for half a dozen under the shelter."

"What for?" Bob asked the question idly, for he wasn't much interested.

"Well, the way things are now we get twenty-five cents a person when we take out a private party. People get hungry. Charge them each a quarter extra and bring them here. They can sit under netting and be away from mosquitoes, and we can give each of them some crabs, an ear of roasted corn, a roasted potato and a fried bass."

"Don't you want to build a hotel?" Danny asked with sarcasm.

Harry was not disturbed. "We could build the hotel next year," he said breezily.

"And of course the bass—— We could always have bass, couldn't we?" Danny grunted in disgust. "Why, we can't catch enough bass to have one apiece for dinner each day. And you want us to give bass to our passengers. Your brains are getting fuzzy."



## THE DISCOVERY

"All right," growled Harry, "but they're not getting rusty because I don't use them."

They brought the boats back to the float much earlier than usual. Harry hoped that somebody would be waiting to hire them to go out that night. But nobody was at the float, and they soon separated.

Next day, for the first time, they missed their nine o'clock flag raising. For when they came to the float Danny Dugan was not in sight, but a note tacked to the flagstaff of the *Little Giant* told them to wait for him. It was almost nine o'clock when his flat-bottom came down the Creek and ran up to the float.

"Where were you?" Harry demanded. "Here it's almost nine——"

"I was scouting around up at Bass End," Danny answered.

"What for?"

"To see if they had left anything behind this time."

Harry's eyes opened. "This time? Do you



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

mean that Duffy and Mason were on the Creek last night?"

"They were," said Danny. "That is, I think they were. I rowed up to Bass End about half past nine o'clock last night and I ran my flat-bottom into the reeds on the other side. Right after the village clock struck ten I heard oars over at Bass End. There was no flash of a pocket light this time. I could see the outlines of a boat and two figures. They stayed there a little while and then they rowed downstream."

"What did they do while they were up there?" Harry asked eagerly.

"If I knew that would I be up there this morning?" Danny demanded.

Harry drew back abashed. For once he had no answer ready.

"Then night before last wasn't an accident," said Perry.

"Not by a long shot," cried Danny.

They journeyed over to Shelter Cove. They



## THE DISCOVERY

were an hour late, but nevertheless they raised the flag with all their customary ceremony. After that, without a word of debate as to what they should do next, they sent the boats up to Bass End.

"Of course," said Bob, "there's only one way for us to find out what all this means. We must come up here to-night and watch."

Danny nodded. "That's my idea."

"We'll have to hide. It was easy for Danny to screen a small rowboat, but we may have trouble with two boats as big as these. Let's explore around here and see how things are."

The *Little Giant* took one bank. The *Gray Whale* took the other. In through the reeds they poked their way. They took note of all landmarks that they might be able to see if a moon were up that night. And shortly before noon Bob, piloting the *Gray Whale*, found a basin of water back among the reeds on the western bank. Here the boats, it was decided, would hide.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

Six excited boys put out from Danny Dugan's float that night at eight o'clock. They had trouble finding their hiding place, but they were successful after a tedious search. Once behind the shelter of the reeds they prepared for the long wait that would follow.

The village clock struck nine, and some time later struck the half hour. Then, after a long interval—at least it seemed long to the boys—the clock boomed ten.

"Quiet now!" Bob ordered. "They'll be along any minute."

"I brought my night glass with me," said Danny.

The minutes passed. Unconsciously the crew of each boat drew together as though for mutual protection. They strained their eyes, but saw nothing. And then, just as Harry was about to speak, Danny's voice whispered a soft:

"Ssh!"



## THE DISCOVERY

Faintly came the sound of oars in their locks and a gentle slapping splash of the water. Danny leveled his glass.

"Don't ask me what I see," he said. "Don't talk to me at all. Keep quiet."

Even without the glass the other boys saw the dark shape that presently came opposite, went on for a ways and then stopped. They heard the suppressed murmur of voices. They held their breaths and did not dare move for fear their feet might strike against something that would make a noise.

Whatever that other boat was doing, she took a frightfully long time. Twice they saw it move, and once it started, apparently to come across the Creek toward them. They had a momentary panic then. But the boat stopped after it had come a few yards, and soon afterward it turned down the Creek melted into the darkness, and at last even the sound of its oars was gone.

They waited then for a few more minutes.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"What did you see, Danny?" Harry demanded excitedly.

"I couldn't see much. They were bent low over the water."

"Couldn't you see enough to make a guess?" Harry asked in disappointment.

"Not half a guess," said Danny "Come on; let's get over there and see what's what."

They sent the boats across the creek. Back and forth they cruised, scanning the water expectantly. The moon came up, and by its light they searched still closer. But whatever it was that Duffy and Mason had been working on had completely disappeared.

"You're all fog-eyed," cried Harry. "They didn't come here just to dip their fingers in the waters. They must have left something down there."

"Suppose you find it," Danny Dugan answered wrathfully; "you're such a wise chap."

"I'm going to find it," Harry retorted. "If I can't see it I'll go in and feel for it."



## THE DISCOVERY

He wriggled out of his clothes. Gently he dropped into the water. He began to swim around and around in an ever widening circle, feeling as he went with his hands and his feet.

Without warning he suddenly straightened in the water and began to tread.

"This way with the boats," he called.

The *Gray Whale* moved toward him. Perry pulled him out.

"Find anything?" Danny asked eagerly from the *Little Giant*.

"There's something down there," Harry answered. "Get me a fishing line. I want to haul it up."

A minute later he cast a line. He had taken off the bob and had clamped some split shot on the end of the line. The hooks and the end of the line disappeared.

"Now," said Harry.

He reeled in. Suddenly the line stiffened. The pole bent almost double. Harry dropped the pole and tried to pull in hand over hand.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"Get another line into this," he cried.  
"She's heavy."

Perry threw over a line, and Danny, from the *Little Giant*, threw over another. Something white and web-like came to the top of the water. They hauled away until Harry could reach out his hand and clasped their discovery.

They could not see what he had. Bob and Perry came running to him. Then Harry stood up, and what he had held splashed back into the water.

"You've let it go," cried Danny.

"I saw what it was," Harry answered.  
"That was enough."

Danny leaned almost half out of his boat.  
"But what was it, Harry? Tell us; what was it?"

"It was a net," Harry said distinctly, "a trammel net. Duffy and Mason have been netting our fish. No wonder they could get twenty and thirty bass a day."

"And no wonder we got none," said Bob.



## CHAPTER VII

### HARRY'S FALSE MOVE

NOW that the boys had solved the mystery of Bass End and actually had the trammel net in their possession, they did not know what to do with it. Neither did they know what to do next. The problem was too big for them. They feared the wrath of the two boys from Great Meadow. So, in their indecision, they allowed the net to stay in the water. They turned the boats around and went back to the Dugan float.

The boys did not know that netting fish in Little Giant Creek, now that the stream had been stocked with bass, had been prohibited by law. In the old days, when the Creek had



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

held the coarser fish, such as carp and eels, there had been no law that stopped the netting of carp, and market fishermen regularly set eel pots. So the boys now saw nothing illegal in the fact that Duffy and Mason netted bass. To their minds the Great Meadow boys were fish hogs pure and simple. The bass had been put in the Creek for sport. Duffy and Mason were taking them out for gain.

"We must stop this," said Harry. "Why, if those nets stay there we won't have a bass left before we know it."

"How are we going to stop it?" Farrant asked bluntly. "Go out there and fight them?"

"N-no," said Harry hesitatingly.

"Take their net?"

"Gosh!" cried Perry. "They'd be mad if they lost their net, wouldn't they? They might think we took it."

That was the phase of the matter that bothered all the boys. Suppose Duffy and Mason



## HARRY'S FALSE MOVE

started out after them? Why, they'd be afraid to venture out on the Creek. Then it would be good-night to their fun, good-night to Shelter Cove, good-night to the Submarine Excursion Company.

"Let's get out early in the morning," Harry proposed.

"What for?" Bob asked.

"We can hide in the reeds and see what they do. We can see if they really get all their bass from that net."

Danny sniffed. "We'd have a fine chance of hiding this whole crowd in daylight, wouldn't we? I guess not. I live right on the Creek. I'm nearer to things than you fellows. I'll go up there first thing in the morning and see what those fellows do."

"Better let me go along to help you," said Harry, but Danny turned a deaf ear to the suggestion.

At daylight next morning Danny was out of bed. He pulled a flat-bottom rowboat



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

around to the front of the float and stepped in. A moment later his oars were out, and he was pulling upstream. He kept close to one bank. He did not know what minute Duffy and Mason would appear, and he did not want them smelling a rat. He wanted to be where, should occasion arise, he could dart his boat into the concealment of the reeds.

He approached Bass End cautiously. There was no sign of another boat. He ran his flat-bottom into the reeds. He took out his watch and waited.

So gently did Duffy and Mason make their journey to Bass End that they were almost at the spot before the sharp ears of Danny heard their oars. With his heart beating heavily the boy parted some reeds and watched. He saw the net come in. He saw fish taken from it. And then he saw the net hauled in and stowed away in the bottom of the boat. The boat put down the Creek again.

He waited in his hiding place for half an



## HARRY'S FALSE MOVE

hour. Leisurely he pulled his way back to the float. He went in to breakfast with the appetite of a boy who had been out in the open for hours. And while he was eating he saw Harry and Bob turn in from the Creek road and hasten toward the float.

Danny finished his breakfast without haste. When he came forth Farrant and Davis and Perry were with Harry and Bob.

"Did they come this morning?" Harry cried.

"They did," said Danny.

"Did they get fish?"

"Fish?" Danny spread his hands. "If they didn't get forty I miss my guess."

"What did they do with them?" Harry demanded.

"Threw them overboard," Danny answered with sarcasm. "You chump! What do you think they did with them? They took them with them, of course, and they took away the net, too. I have this whole game doped out.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

They put weights at the bottom of the net. That takes it down to the Creek bottom. Then they put corks on the top. That keeps the top floating. Any bass that swims up or down the Creek hasn't a chance."

"But how do they keep the net from the surface?" Bob asked. "Boats would row into it——"

"Nix!" said Danny. "They're too wise for that. They just have enough net measured out so that boats will go over the net-top. They're a mighty foxy couple."

They were all of that, the chums were ready to agree. They were so crafty, in fact, that Bob did not think that it was possible to put a stop to any of their operations. They were so much bigger, so much older, so much stronger, and apparently so much wiser. It would be an unequal struggle.

"I don't know about that," said Danny. "We have a handful of brains ourselves. Of



## HARRY'S FALSE MOVE

course, you wouldn't think so to look at Harry, but we have."

"I'm the boy with the most brains," Harry said calmly. "You're such a smart fellow, Danny, what plan have you?"

"None," said Danny.

"Well, I have a plan. Suppose we start a watch on these fellows. Keep a record of when they come and when they go. Maybe they come and go at different times on different days."

"What good will it do us to watch them?" Perry demanded. "We can't get any place by watching."

"No?" said Harry. "Let's see if we won't. We want to do something to stop this net fishing, don't we?"

"Of course we do," Bob told him.

"We don't want to get caught if we do anything, do we?"

"No."

"Well, then, how are we going to manage



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

so as not to get caught unless we know something about their movements. If we're going to start something any time it suits us, we may be caught in the act. We must have this figured out so well that when we start business we'll know we won't be interrupted."

Here was the logic that appealed to the chums. After much arguing it was decided that Danny should not have the sole glory of watching. At night they could use their submarines. They had used them once and had not been discovered. Danny could watch alone in the mornings until such time as a place was found from which they could all spy with safety.

"Suppose Duffy and Mason catch us watching them?" Perry asked uneasily.

"Then there'll be trouble," Danny said with conviction.

Perry didn't like that. In fact, none of the boys did. But there was no way to avoid this



## HARRY'S FALSE MOVE

threat of danger unless they were willing to give over the Creek and its bass.

"And I'll take a chance on fighting Duffy," Harry said, "before I'll do that."

Next day the boys from Great Meadow arrived at five fifteen o'clock.

"I don't have to leave the house," Danny exulted. "I can set my alarm clock for five o'clock, get up when it rings, take my glass to the window and scan the Creek until they come in sight. They can't get past me."

"Is that how you saw them this morning?" Harry demanded.

"It was," Danny grinned. "And as soon as they passed I jumped into bed for another little snooze."

"No peeping out of the windows for mine," Harry announced. "That's too tame. Tonight I'm going to be up near Bass End."

"We'll all be there," said Farrant.

"Hope they don't catch us," Perry muttered nervously.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP.

That night they hid in the reeds, and with the aid of a friendly moon, watched the net go overboard again. They timed the arrival of the Great Meadow boys as ten-twenty o'clock. Duffy and Mason acted as though they feared no discovery. When the net was out they turned their boat around and pulled down the stream.

So, for five days, the watching continued. At the end of that time Bob and his chums had come to the conclusion that the two net fishermen never arrived later at night than ten-thirty o'clock, and never later in the morning than five-thirty o'clock.

"I've noticed one peculiar thing," Harry observed. "They always do a lot of monkeying before they drop their net at night. I bet they put it in the same place every time."

"Why?" Farrant asked.

"So they'll know just where to find it in the morning," Harry answered. "I'll show you to-night."



## HARRY'S FALSE MOVE

And that night, after the Great Meadow boat had departed, the submarines went across the Creek to Bass End. Harry dropped a fishing line and found the inshore end of the net.

"See?" he demanded. "She's right in line with that tallest tree. Suppose we give them a bit of worry?"

"How?" Perry asked eagerly.

"Why," Harry answered, "we can——" He gave a sudden shout. "Why, we can about tie them up for one night. Take this end and turn it upstream. Then, instead of lying across the Creek, the net will lie parallel with it. Maybe they won't get a fish to-night."

What a fine way that was to take a crack at Duffy and Mason! The end of the net was dragged aboard the *Gray Whale*. She came around in a circle until she was about near the center of the Creek. Then the boat went upstream until the net pulled. After that the net was dropped.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

The chums went back to the float giggling and chuckling.

"Oh," said Harry, "I guess they're not the chaps who can think of things only."

Next morning, when the chums arrived for the start of another day, they found Danny pacing up and down the float with a grave face.

"We've put our feet in it this time," he announced.

"How?" Bob demanded.

"I went up to the End to watch," Danny said. "I wanted to see how Duffy and Mason would act. When they didn't find the part that Harry moved, they got excited. Gosh, but they were mad. When they did find it, they hauled it in as fast as they could work. Then they turned downstream and rowed as fast as they could. Duffy kept looking back. Believe me, if those fellows find out who monkeyed with that net there'll be trouble."



## HARRY'S FALSE MOVE

"Huh!" grunted Harry. "How will they find out?"

But his voice wasn't any too sure. What a chump he had been, he thought, to get fresh with anything owned by Duffy or Mason!



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE BOAT THAT PASSED

**A**ND now a time of caution came over the chums of the submarines. They must do nothing that would arouse suspicion. They must act as though they had no knowledge of that net, or no dread of punishment.

Danny reported next morning that Duffy and Mason had not gone up the Creek.

"Maybe they got past without you seeing them," said Harry.

"Maybe they didn't," retorted Danny. "The Creek is only half a mile wide here. How could any boat get past in daylight? Anyhow, I was awake and watching at half past four o'clock."



## THE BOAT THAT PASSED

What to do to-day was the next question. Suppose the fellows from Great Meadow came snooping around?

"If they don't see us on the Creek they'll know that something is up," Bob argued. "We ought to go out."

"But what will we do?" Perry asked.

"Go to Shelter Cove. Crab, fish. Do anything. Build a fire. Cook our dinner there. Act as though we know of no net."

They brought the submarines upstream.

"Suppose Duffy or Mason come along?" Danny Dugan answered grimly. "It all depends upon what they do. If they let us alone we'll let them alone."

That day the chums lived in apprehension. But neither of the boys they dreaded appeared. That night Danny came up to the end and watched alone. It took all his courage to make the trip, but he was bound that he would know what was happening. Half-past ten o'clock came, and brought neither



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

Duffy nor Mason. Danny pulled his boat toward home.

"They're afraid," he said. "They think some fishermen found the net, and will be angry about it, and will lick them if they find them. They'll stay away for a while."

Next morning he watched the Creek from daylight, but the fishing boat did not come into the Creek.

"Take my word for it," he said that morning to Bob, "they'll stay away for quite a spell."

"Let's try the bass fishing," Bob cried eagerly.

"And let's try to get another party for the Submarine Excursion Company," said Far-rant.

Harry whistled thoughtfully. "About this excursion business," he said. "I've been doing some thinking. Suppose a passenger was to fall overboard?"

"Let him swim back," Davis answered.



## THE BOAT THAT PASSED

"But suppose he couldn't swim."

They hadn't thought of that.

"Isn't there a law," Danny Dugan asked hazily, "about life preservers?"

"You bet there is," Harry told him. "Each boat ought to have two. Let's go to see Mr. Hinkelstedt."

From some place in his shop the old boat builder produced four preservers.

"You must place them so you can easy get at them," he warned. "When you want a life preservers you want it in lots of hurries. Make them fast outside the boat—one on each sides. Then, when you need one, there she is."

"Good idea!" said Harry.

"And you should paint the names of your boats on them," said Mr. Hinkelstedt. "Then everything is shipshapes."

They took the life preservers aboard and turned out into the stream.

"Suppose we quit bass for the day," Danny



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suggested. "Suppose we fix up these preservers?"

"What's the matter with putting the name of the boats on everything we own?" Harry asked eagerly. "Dry batteries, candle holders—everything?"

The chums decided that that would be a bully way to pass the day. While Farrant did the lettering, the others cleaned ship. Woodwork was washed down. Flagstaffs and sloping decks were scrubbed. They cleaned the glass of the lookouts. To do this the crew of the *Gray Whale* had to take off the wire that protected the glass.

"See what a nuisance that wire is?" Danny grinned. "None for my boat."

"Safety first," said Bob. "You may be sorry some day, Danny."

"Rats!" said Danny. "If I see a tree trunk or something coming I'll steer out of the way, I guess. I won't steer into it, will I?"

When the preservers were dry, they were



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put into place. Heavy, long, thick nails were driven into the side of each boat, and from these nails the preservers were hung.

"We ought to put line on them," Danny urged, but Harry scoffed at the idea. If they had to throw one overboard, he said, the Creek wasn't so wide that it would float away and get lost.

"But suppose we want to haul in some person who has hold of a preserver?" Danny insisted.

"Anybody who hasn't strength enough to hold on until we get to him, wouldn't be able to hold on while we pull him through the water," Harry replied.

The third day passed, and brought with it no sign of the Great Meadow boys. Then, on the fourth day, the chums went up to Bass End to see whether the absence of the net had improved the fishing.

It did not take them long to come to the conclusion that the sport had improved. It



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was possible to get a bass every now and then. Why, if that net was never again put back, the fishing would soon be fine.

The chums were soon in rare good humor. All at once Perry whispered in a frightened tone that a boat was coming. The good humor vanished.

They watched the boat approach. Presently they saw that Duffy was pulling, and that Mason sat in the stern seat. At that Perry's heart began to thump wildly, and his hand shook so that his bob trembled in the water.

"Here," Bob called, "reel in. They'll surely suspect something if they see you acting that way. Duck below and stay there until you're all right."

Perry disappeared from sight.

The boys from Great Meadow came almost abreast of the submarines. They lowered overboard a big flat stone as an anchor.

"How's the fishing?" Duffy asked easily.

"Fair," said Danny. His bob jerked. He



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hooked his fish, played it, and brought it in.

"Want to hire our boats to-day?"

"Not to-day," Duffy grinned. He brought out a rod, prepared his line, and cast. "How—ah—how has fishing been?"

"It was punk for a little while," Danny answered. He had become the spokesman of the party. The others seemed to be afraid to speak.

"Punk, eh?" Duffy glanced at him shrewdly. "Why was it punk?"

"Oh, people around here think that the fish must have died, or that there must be some poison in the water, or something like that."

Duffy nodded. He hooked a fish. There was silence until he had the bass in the boat and had his line out again.

"Is that the only reason people said the fishing was poor?" he asked.

"That's the only reason I heard," Danny told him.



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"You fellows hear all the gossip up and down the Creek, don't you?"

"Every bit of it," Danny said stoutly. "We're out on this Creek all summer long."

After that there was another long spell of silence. At last Duffy said:

"There hasn't been any talk, has there?"

Danny pretended surprise. "About what?"

"Oh, about something being found on the Creek."

"About what being found?" This time Danny's tone of surprise was a work of art.

"Oh, anything. You know that things are always being found on a creek like this."

Danny shook his head. "There was nothing found. I'd have heard if there was. The news would have gone from boathouse to boat-house."

Duffy laughed and nodded to Mason. "See that," he said. He became quite jolly, and told a funny story or two.

Bob, who feared that if they stayed too long



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somebody might let something slip, said that they had enough bass for dinner and had better go. So the submarines turned their noses around and went downstream. They passed into Shelter Cove—and once they were inside the inlet, Perry's head came up through the hatch.

"Hear all those questions?" he demanded. "They were pumping. They want to find out if anybody said anything about finding their old net."

Danny grinned. "They didn't get much out of me, did they? They think that some boat shifted that net and didn't know it. I suppose they'll come back and start netting again."

Harry's face darkened. "They had better not," he said.

"Huh!" said Farrant. "What would you do."

"Wait until they come back," said Harry. They cooked their bass, and feasted royally.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

On their way home that evening they passed Giant Creek Park. Perry thought he saw a way for the Submarine Excursion Company to make money.

"There will be a picnic at the park to-morrow," he said. "Couldn't we take out parties at ten or fifteen cents a ride?"

Danny looked dubious. "I don't know about that."

"But there's always a lot of kids on a picnic," Perry insisted. "Let's try it, Danny. Mr. Seeley owns the park, and he has a big float. It would be a fine thing for him to have two submarine boats amusing his picnic crowd. Let's ask him to let us use his float." After they had tied up the submarines they interviewed Mr. Seeley. Could they use the float? Of course they could. He wished them all manner of success. Could they put up a sign? Well, they could put up a small one.

The chums went back to Danny Dugan's



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float. There the ready Farrant painted this sign:

THIS WAY  
SEE A REAL SUBMARINE  
TAKE A SAIL UNDER WATER  
CHILDREN—10  
ADULTS—15

"There's one thing about this company I like," Danny said. "When we stop making money one way, we find some other way."

"What time do we report?" Perry asked.

"These picnics never get started until about two o'clock in the afternoon. Let's get to the park float at about half-past one o'clock."

Next day, as soon as they had eaten their noon meal, the chums assembled at the Dugan float. A bright day of sunshine it was, and the submarines sparkled with cleanliness. Bob and Danny had donned white duck trousers. They looked the part of gallant commanders, indeed.



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Shortly after one o'clock they ran the boats to the float. The sign had been stretched over a small frame and nailed to a stout length of lumber. This lumber was jabbed into the soil. The company sat back and waited for business.

Soon the float was crowded with curious children, and in the wake of these came their mothers. There was much excited speculation, but no offers to buy a ride.

"Sink!" Bob ordered. "Show them."

So, before the astonished eyes of the watchers, the traps were lowered, the tanks were partly filled, and the boats sank beneath the surface. With their ventilators and flagstuffs showing the boats cruised about for fifteen minutes. They came to the surface and went back to the float. And at once there was a struggle among a dozen children to get aboard.

"Thunder!" said Harry. "Let's take three or four kids at a time. We can watch them."



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"Three is plenty," said Bob. At a signal Farrant raised his voice:

"Have your money ready. Only three children to a boat. Have your money handy. Here, Johnny, you'll have to wait. There are three boys in there already."

For the next three hours the *Gray Whale* and the *Little Giant* did a steady business. Then came a lull. Harry sat on the sloping deck and fanned himself.

"Whew! I'm tired. How much have we made?"

"Two dollars and ninety cents here," Danny called.

"Three dollars and twenty cents here," laughed Bob.

Harry whistled. "As much as that? Six dollars and ten cents. We ought to give Perry a commission. Think there'll be any business to-night?"

"No children at night," said Bob. "We'll give rides like our party sails. Twenty-five



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cents a person. Suppose Farrant goes up and calls through the Park that no children will be taken down after seven o'clock, and that the price for night sails will be twenty-five cents a person."

Farrant stepped off to the float. "I'll tell them," he said.

They heard his voice as he moved through the Park. His announcement brought a flurry of boys and girls who had not yet sailed in the boats. Seventy cents was taken in. Bob went off to telephone that the company was doing nicely, and that he wouldn't be home for dinner, and Danny had Mr. Seeley make him up a dollar's worth of sandwiches. The sandwiches and seven quarts of bottled milk were carried to the submarines. The crews feasted.

Afterward they hung their night lights to the top of the flagstaffs. Then they were ready for business.

At nine thirty o'clock they quit for the day.



## THE BOAT THAT PASSED

The evening had brought them two dollars and fifty cents. They had spent one dollar for sandwiches, and sixty-three cents for milk. They had seven dollars and sixty-seven cents left as the result of the day's work.

Harry, as soon as the boats were tied to the Dugan float, stretched off at full length.

"I could sleep right here," he grunted. "It's tough work pumping those boats up and down all day."

Farrant and Davis and Perry agreed. They were all worked out. A languor came over them. They had a feeling that they just wanted to lie off there and rest, and that they didn't care whether or not they got home that night.

From up the Creek at the Park came the sleepy strains of music. The Creek was full of dark shadows, with here and there a lighter spot.

There was very little moon to-night. What there was of it came from behind some



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clouds and gave the Creek a feeble glow.

Danny was sitting beside Bob. Suddenly they saw him come up to a crouch. He stared across the Creek.

"There's a boat over there," he said. "See it? There—approaching the Hinkelstedt float. See it?"

They were all crouched now. Harry spoke:

"Going what way, Danny?"

"Upstream. See it?"

They saw it. It was so dark as to be vague and ghostlike. But the dimness did not deceive Danny.

"Duffy and Mason," he said. "They're going up to spread their nets. I'd know that boat among a thousand. I've watched it too often to be fooled."

At that Harry jumped up. Somehow he seemed to have grown an inch or two and to have become broader across the shoulders.

"I don't know what you fellows intend to do," he announced angrily, "but my mind is



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made up. Those chaps can't spoil any more of my fishing without trouble. To-night they spread their last net."

Danny looked at him. "What do you want to do, Harry?"

"Take their net," was the answer: "take it and keep it."



## CHAPTER IX

### INTO TROUBLE

THERE was a surprised murmur from the other boys. Perry gave a frightened gasp. Harry suddenly seemed to have become the leader.

"They'll find out we took it," Perry said. His voice trembled.

"They won't," said Harry. "And, anyhow, what if they do? They have no right to spread a net in this Creek. They spoil the sport for every chap who wants to fish for bass honestly. I'm tired of it. If they're allowed to go on, they'll soon have about every bass. They what? Nothing left for the rest of us."

"But—but couldn't we get into trouble for taking their net?" Farrant asked.



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Harry shook his head. "I don't know. I don't think so. If we took that net and then went around and told everybody why we took it, everybody would say we were right."

"But we don't want to tell everybody," Perry burst out. "We want to keep it a secret."

"Keep it a secret then," Harry answered grimly. "But we'll take their net. We'll keep it until the bass season ends. Then we'll return it to them so they won't know where it came from."

"And we could send them a letter," Perry said eagerly, "with no name signed to it. And we could tell them that if they spread a net next season we'd tell all the fishermen on the Creek about it and make things hot for them."

"Next season's a long ways off," Harry remarked. "First we must get the net."

"Not to-night," Bob said quietly.

They all looked at the leader. He had



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dropped back on the float and was resting on one elbow.

"How are you, Farrant?" he asked. "Tired?"

"Dog tired," Farrant answered.

"And you're tired, too, Danny. So am I. So is Harry. What a fine chance we'd have getting away with a big net to-night. Wait a while."

"All right," said Harry. "We'll take it to-morrow morning before they get here."

"We won't," said Bob.

Now Danny nodded his head as though he understood. "I see what you mean, Bob. If we want to get that net in the morning, we'd have to leave here about four thirty o'clock. We'll all sleep like bricks to-night. None of us will be awake that early to-morrow."

"Correct," said Bob. "And we'll leave that net alone to-morrow night. I don't like these night stunts. It's too dark to see what you're doing, and fellows like us who don't know



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much about handling nets, need some light. We don't want to carry lanterns, do we."

"No," Perry answered at once.

"Then a little daylight is the proper thing. This would be my plan: Rest up to-morrow. Get to bed early to-morrow night. Day after to-morrow we can get away from this float no later than half-past four. By the time Duffy and Mason arrive we'll have the net back here stowed away in Danny's cellar."

"That sounds good to me," said Danny. "How about you, Harry?"

"I guess I was going too fast," Harry admitted. "Well, to-morrow morning they get their last fish. That's the agreement, isn't it?"

"That's the agreement," said Bob.

Bob's prediction that they would sleep soundly that night proved good judgment. Next morning none of the boys awakened early. It was nine o'clock before Farrant, the last of the chums, arrived at the float.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"Mr. Seeley was down here this morning," Danny told them.

"What did he want?" Perry asked eagerly.

"He wants us to have the submarines around for all the picnics. He said the people were all talking about it. Of course, it's a good thing for his Park because it makes an extra attraction, and it's a good thing for us because it brings us in a lot of money. Suppose we work the picnics, and give up taking out private parties? We never know when a private party will want to go out, but we can sit here this morning and know the date of every picnic that will be at Mr. Seeley's Park for the rest of the summer."

"How many more picnics will he have?" Harry asked.

"Six. If we do as well at all of them, we ought to have fifty dollars in the treasury before we go back to school. Well, what do you say? Picnics or private parties?"

They said picnics with a yell and a cheer.



## INTO TROUBLE

Farrant went out and took down the big canvas sign that for so long had faced the Creek road.

Everything they did to-day was done with a busy, bustling air. Early in the afternoon they came back from a fishing trip to Bass End. They had boated two fish.

"The net was out again last night," Harry said bitterly. "See what happens?"

"To-night's their last night," said Farrant. "Cheer up, Harry."

"I can't cheer up," Harry growled. "They don't play the game fair."

"There won't be much fair playing if they catch us," Danny told them.

They decided that they would not assemble, as was their wont, on the float after supper. Each boy was pledged to be in bed no later than nine o'clock.

"Don't anybody go taking any forty winks in the morning," Danny Dugan cautioned.

"When you open your eyes you hop out of



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bed. Everybody here by half-past four."

"We'll be here," said Davis.

The day was a misty gray when Danny came out on the float next morning. Objects were hazy. He turned the noses of the boats upstream. While he was working Harry came through the grayness and began to help him.

"Brrr!" Harry grunted. "It's chilly."

"It will get warmer when the sun comes up," Danny said. "Here come Bob and Farrant."

The day was growing brighter. Bob jumped into the *Gray Whale*, and Farrant and Danny went into the *Little Giant*. They had nothing to do now but wait for Perry and for Davis.

Davis came first. He completed his crew, and the *Little Giant* cast off. Then they saw Perry coming on the run as though he was afraid that he was late.

Both boats were off and away, the *Little Giant* slightly in the lead.



## INTO TROUBLE

"I have a glass here," Danny said. "Somebody will have to watch the Bend while we work. As soon as a boat is sighted rounding the Bend we'll get away."

"But suppose we haven't got the net in by that time?" Harry asked.

"Then we'll have to come for it another time," Danny said.

The sun flashed over the hills in the east, and at once the mists began to rise. The morning grew warmer. As the mists crept away distant objects became visible. An uncertain, wavering shaft of sunlight crept over the surface of the Creek.

They rounded the Bend. It was now a straight run to Bass End.

"Get hooks and sinkers ready," Bob ordered. "We'll have to cast for that net."

They ran past Shelter Cove. There would be no flag-raising to-day. Bass End came into sight.

Their hearts began to beat nervously. Here



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

was the test. They knew nothing about nets. Would they have time enough to get the net in before the Great Meadow lads appeared?

"What time is it?" Danny asked.

"Fifteen of five," Farrant answered. "We left the float at twenty minutes past four."

Five minutes later they stopped their engines. They were at Bass End. Harry cast his line. And at once, as he pulled it in, it tightened.

"I have it," he called. "Try to catch yours near mine, Farrant."

Farrant, after two trials, succeeded. They began to haul in the net—slowly, at first, until a portion was in each boat. Then faster.

But soon they saw that there was something wrong. They were both hauling at the same point, and the off end of the net was not moving.

"Here," Harry called, "drop away, Farrant. Fish for the other end. Let's get both ends coming in."



## INTO TROUBLE

The *Little Giant* was backed off. Farrant, with a new line, cast. As Harry had done, he too succeeded in hooking the net at the first trial. He hauled in, and found he had the other end.

The net was only six feet deep, but it was awkward for the boys to handle. They made slow, sloppy, messy progress. Many bass were caught by the gills. They flopped about and struggled to escape, and they made it harder for the chums.

Then, too, when they hauled in the end, the middle sagged down between the two boats and went back into the water.

"You get your part in," Harry yelled, "and I'll get mine. Then we'll move toward each other and pick up what net lies in between."

That seemed logical. They worked harder. A part of the hauled in net slipped down from Farrant's grasp. It struck a life preserver, took it from its fastenings, and dropped it into the Creek.



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"Hurry!" called Danny. "Five after five."

"Some one ought to watch the Bend," said Bob.

Perry volunteered. But he was doing good work and they kept him hauling where he was. Besides, the glass was in the *Little Giant*, and the *Gray Whale* did not want to stop work to get it. So Davis took the instrument and scanned the lower Creek.

"I don't see anything," he said.

"All right," Danny cried. "Put that glass where you can put your hands on it in a moment. Pitch in here. We want to pick up that preserver after we have finished."

They hauled away. Finally they had the ends in. Then the boats began to come toward each other and haul up the middle.

This proved to be even harder than the ends had been, for now they had to haul over the bow. They were cramped for room.

"Fifteen after five," Danny called. "Take a look with the glass, Davis."



## INTO TROUBLE

Davis again reported the Creek clear.

Slowly the middle came in. Finally only a foot or so of net was left, and that stretched across from one boat to the other out of water.

"Now," Harry called, "give us what net you have, Farrant. We'll stow the whole thing below deck in the *Gray Whale*."

Inch by inch the net was dropped into the hold of Bob's boat. Finally the last of it disappeared. The submarines looked as though somebody had played a hose over them.

"Shake it up!" Danny ordered. "We want to get that life preserver. It's drifting upstream."

They swung the boats about and started. And at that moment Davis called:

"Boat coming."

Perry jumped. "Where?"

"Just below Shelter Cove."

"Swing around," cried Bob. "We'll have to let that preserver go. Start back for the float, Danny."



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The boats turned and headed down Creek. Davis still had the glass trained.

"It's Duffy and Mason," he said. Danny told him to put the glass away.

"We don't want those fellows to see it," he explained rapidly. "Get past them without exciting suspicion. Act as though everything is all right. I'll wave to them and talk. You fellows keep quiet."

"You can bet I will," said Perry. He pointed to the sloping sides of the boat. "Look at those fish scales."

Bob jumped up. "Come on. Lively. Get a bucket or two of water. Wash them off."

They had no buckets, but they had dippers, and in less than a minute the submarines were clean of evidences of fish. Then, with jumping pulses, they waited to pass the oncoming boat.

The Great Meadow boat came abreast. Duffy whispered to Mason. They stared suspiciously at the submarines.



## INTO TROUBLE

"You fellows must have got up before breakfast," Danny called cheerily.

But neither of the Great Meadow lads returned the sally. Duffy's eyes had narrowed.

"Where have you kids been?" he asked.

Danny waved his hands. "Upstream. Away up above Bass End. We camped out last night."

Duffy seemed to be relieved at that. But Mason's stare continued to be suspicious. He said something. They stopped rowing, and looked over at the chugging submarines.

"Steady!" Bob whispered. "Don't show any fright. Call something to them, Danny."

"Danny called across. "We'll be up later for bass. Wait for us."

The words seemed to reassure Mason. He put his oar into the water. Duffy did likewise. The rowboat resumed its journey toward Bass End. Soon she began to dwindle in size.

"Get out the glass," said Danny. "Keep an



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

eye on them, Davis. What are they doing?"

"Still rowing," Davis reported. After a time he said: "They've stopped."

"Now for the trouble," Harry said tensely.

"They're leaning over the sides," Davis said. "They're—Gosh, but they're excited. Now they're rowing farther up."

"What for?" Harry asked.

"They've stopped," Davis reported. "They're taking something out of the water. They're— It's the life preserver."

"And it has 'Little Giant' painted on it," Perry called.

"They'll think we dropped it coming down," Harry argued. "It means nothing to find a life preserver. We told them we were away up past Bass End, and they find the preserver farther up than the End."

"But suppose it has fish scales on it," Perry insisted.

That put a new light on the matter, didn't it? They turned to Davis.



## INTO TROUBLE

"What are they doing now?" Harry asked.

Davis dropped the glass. "They're coming down the Creek like sixty," he cried excitedly.

"They're after us."



## CHAPTER X

### A DISASTROUS CHASE

HARRY, as engineer of the *Gray Whale*, jumped down into the hold and tried to force more speed. Farrant tried to help the *Little Giant* go faster. After a few minutes they realized that the boats were making their best speed. So the chase became a question of how fast could Duffy and Mason row their boat.

"Keep the glass on them," Danny ordered.

Davis found the instrument and trained it. After a minute he said:

"They're gaining."

"Much?" Perry asked in a frightened voice.

"They're going much faster than we are," said Davis.



## A DISASTROUS CHASE

Presently they could see every action of the rowboat without the use of the glass. The lads from Great Meadow were putting drive and power into their strokes. The foam curled back from the bow. Every movement of their bodies was suggestive of anger, and of strength, and of future punishment. Perry wished that he was safely back on Danny Dugan's float, and well out of this fix.

"They're gaining every second," he wailed.

There was no doubt of that. The rowboat had long, graceful, rounded lines. She had been built for speed. And now the two rowers were getting that speed out of her.

"Shift to the other side of the Creek," Bob ordered.

They shifted. A few minutes later they saw Mason glance over his shoulder. Next both rowers pulled sharply on one oar. The bow of the pursuing boat shifted and followed the new course the submarines had taken.

"They're surely after us," gulped Perry.



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Danny spoke quietly to Farrant. "Can't you get a little more speed out of her?"

"Wouldn't I if I could?" Farrant demanded.

The submarines reached the Bend. They made the turn. They came down stream. Far below them was the Dugan float and safety—far, far below. Much could happen before they reached this haven.

"What will they do?" Perry asked.

"Try to come aboard," Harry answered grimly. His lips thinned. "Let them try it?"

"What will we do?" Perry whispered.

"Fight," Harry answered.

"Oh, but I know a way," Perry cried. "We won't be submerging this boat, will we?"

"We will not," Bob answered. "They'd batter off our ventilators. Then where would we be?"

"Then we won't need the pump," Perry cried. "Help me, Harry."

"Help you do what?"



## A DISASTROUS CHASE

"Help me unscrew this pump handle. We'll drop the battle hatch. When one of them tries to get aboard, we'll prod him overboard. They can both swim. We needn't worry about them going overboard."

Harry reached for a screw-driver and a monkey wrench.

In the days when the *Gray Whale* and the *Little Giant* had been at war, Mr. Hinkelstedt had built this battle hatch. It fitted inside the hatch opening, and was made of stout wood. It was in reality a grating. When it was dropped and hooked into place, no person could climb up the sloping roof of the boat and drop down into the hold. The battle hatch held him out.

The rowboat was so near now that they could hear Duffy and Mason grunting at the oars. Perry called softly to Danny. Danny looked around.

"We're going to slow down," he said. "You keep on going."



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"Nix!" Danny answered. "We'll stand together."

"But this is a plot, Danny. We want them to try to board us. We're going to drop the battle hatch and—"

"Oh!" said Danny.

Harry reduced the speed a bit. The *Little Giant* drew ahead. Mason looked over his shoulder.

"Come on," they heard him cry. "One of them's in trouble. Hit it up 'Sling!'"

"I'll trouble them," Duffy roared.

The *Gray Whale* continued to fall behind. Perry, in pretended alarm, called to Danny to turn back and help them. But the *Little Giant* did not change her course. Duffy gave a high, cackling laugh. First he and Mason would settle with one of these interfering boats, and then they would settle with the other.

Perry dropped the battle hatch and slid the bolt that held it into place. Now that the



## A DISASTROUS CHASE

moment of conflict had come, he was frightened. Suppose something went wrong? Suppose a big, husky chap like Duffy took hold of the trap and ripped it off?

Bob, peering through the lookout, saw the rowboat come up with them.

"They're alongside," he whispered.

They heard the boat scrape against the side. Then came clumsy sounds that told them that somebody was trying to clamber up the wet, sloping deck.

"Get ready!" called Harry.

Perry had the long, slender pump handle. He saw a hand reach out and clutch one of the wooden bars of the grating. Then came another hand, and after that Duffy's face.

"I'll rip that off," Duffy said, "and I'll—"

"Give it to him," Harry cried.

Perry poked out the pump handle. The end of it struck Duffy in the chest. He had seen it coming and had tried to draw back. But he could not evade the thrust. They saw



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

his hands clutch and grasp the weapon. Then his fingers slipped and gave. They heard a cry from Mason, and the sound of something falling along the side. Then a splash.

"Speed her up," Bob ordered excitedly.

Harry sent the propeller going at its best. They threw back the hatch and looked out. The *Little Giant* had halted. Farrant waved his hat and cheered.

Duffy was in the water and swimming toward the rowboat. They knew that it would take him several minutes to climb over the stern, and it would be still another minute before he could take up an oar and resume the chase. In those few minutes the boys in the submarines hoped to gain considerably on the pursuing net fishermen.

Down Creek went the *Little Giant* and the *Gray Whale*. Their last ounce of power was going into their motors. They could not have gone faster had their lives depended on their speed.



## A DISASTROUS CHASE

"Well done," Farrant yelled. "There goes Duffy into the boat. Look at him shaking himself like a wet dog. Now he has an oar. Say, they mean business this time, don't they?"

There was a hot, mad, grimness to the way Duffy and Mason worked the oars. The chums hoped that this time the submarines would hold their own. But the rowboat gained faster than during the first leg of the race.

"We can't work the battle hatch again," Perry cried. "Oh, what shall we do?"

"Why can't you push him off again?" Danny Dugan demanded.

"Because he won't come close enough. They'll run alongside, and then Duffy'll stand up and batter the hatch with an oar."

Here was a new danger. They tried to think out a plan as their boats plugged along. But no plan seemed to come to them.

The rowboat was pretty close now. Perry dropped the battle hatch. He did not think



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

it would prove much of a protection, but it would stand off the enemy for a time, anyway.

The rowboat ran alongside again. And after a moment those in the *Gray Whale* heard something smash against the battle hatch.

"Look out," cried Perry. "He'll smash it in on us."

"And after that I'll smash you," Duffy roared.

But he didn't deliver the second blow at the trap. They all heard Danny Dugan's voice:

"Quit it, Duffy, or I'll run you down."

Perry caught his breath and waited, but no more blows fell. Harry cried excitedly that the rowboat was drifting astern. They threw up the battle hatch and looked out.

Then they saw what had happened. Danny had circled the *Little Giant* about and had steered straight for the fishing boat. And in panic, lest they be sunk, Duffy and Mason had backed off.

"That's the way to beat them," Danny



## A DISASTROUS CHASE

called. "You go down the Creek a ways, and I'll guard. Then turn around, and I'll go down and you guard. Run right into them if they try any monkey shines."

So the *Gray Whale* went down the Creek. The *Little Giant* was left alone. The rowboat maneuvered as though it would attack. But a hail came from Bob, and Danny swung the boat about and sailed down the stream.

Instantly the rowboat was away in pursuit. It had almost come up with the *Little Giant* when the *Gray Whale* showed her nose. And this time it was Harry who cried for them to make way or be run down.

It took Duffy but an instant to see the plan of battle that these boys had. He was beaten. But he snarled and growled and would not give up. He kept following them and threatening them. The result was that their journey down the Creek was slow and cautious. They would take no chances.

And they thanked their stars that Danny



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

Dugan had thought to use their boats as rams. Otherwise, by this time the battle hatch of the *Gray Whale* would have been smashed, and they would have been at the mercy of the bigger boys.

They passed the cinder path on the Creek road where, in the old days, Bob and Harry and Perry had moored their flat-bottoms. They passed Mr. Hinkelstedt's place. They went through the boatways of the railroad bridge. And thus, in time, they came to Danny Dugan's float.

Now, at the last moment, the rowboat made a vicious attack. There was not room for either of the submarines to swing about and charge. So Duffy and Mason swept forward in the hopes that they would be able to run alongside and board one of the boats.

But unexpected resistance met them. Far-rant dove into the hold of the *Little Giant*, and came up with two fly rods. Davis took one, and he took another. Seeing these



## A DISASTROUS CHASE

weapons of defense, Harry brought forth his own rod.

Duffy and Mason stopped their advance with abruptness. They had no desire to have those light rods rapped smartly across their faces. They backed water. Slowly they made their way toward the mouth of the Creek.

Danny and his crew were now safely out of the *Little Giant*. But instead of making the submarine fast to the float Danny held the rope in his hands.

"Y—y—yah!" he yelled. "Go back to Great Meadow and stay there."

At that Duffy stood up in the boat. He was known as "Sling" because of his readiness to throw stones. Now, as he drew back his arm, Bob called a warning.

"Look out, fellows. Duck!"

It was not a stone that Duffy threw. It was an oblong, two-ounce fishing sinker. It came through the air in a graceful curve.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

They saw that it would fall short of them. Danny stood up anxiously.

"It's going to hit the *Little Giant*," he said.

Now, in the *Gray Whale*, the lookout glass, when the boat was not submerged, was out of water. But the *Little Giant*, even when on the surface, had part of its lookout under the surface.

The sinker struck the *Little Giant*. They heard the crash of glass. Bob sprang up.

"She's flooding," he yelled. "Hold that rope, Danny. They've broken the lookout glass."

But the rope had slipped from Danny's hands. The *Little Giant* rolled sluggishly. Danny clutched for the rope. It drifted away from the float.

Without hesitation Farrant jumped overboard. He caught the rope and swam with it to the float. They took it as he reached it up to them.

But now the *Little Giant* was low in the



## A DISASTROUS CHASE

water, and had drifted out toward the current. There was not rope enough left to wind about the short, stocky posts that dotted the edge of the float.

"If we can only hold this," Harry said hopefully, "we're all right. Why didn't you protect your lookouts with wire, Danny?"

Danny's voice was almost a sob. "Why didn't I? Did I know anything like this was going to happen?"

The submarine settled lower. Their arms felt the strain of the rope. Perry, who was on the end nearest the float edge, suddenly cried out that he was being pulled into the water.

"It's no use," Danny groaned. "Good-bye *Little Giant*. Why didn't I cover those lookouts?"

Perry swayed on the float edge. Bob pushed him back. That meant that one less pair of hands was on the rope. A moment later Bob felt the pull dragging him forward. He dropped the rope.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"No use," he said quietly. "Let go."

Standing on the float they watched the submarine settle in the water. Lower and lower she went. The water began to creep up to the top of her ventilators. Finally these, too, went under. The water poured down them into her tank. And with both hold and tank full of water she plunged suddenly and disappeared into the Creek bottom.

The *Little Giant* was gone.



## CHAPTER XI

### MR. HINKELSTEDT EXPLAINS

DUFFY and Mason had heard the crash of the glass. They realized, almost as quickly as did Bob, that the *Little Giant* was sinking. With popping eyes they stared back at what that thrown sinker had done. As soon as they saw the ventilators go under they dug their oars into the water and raced away from the scene of the sinking.

They showed plainly that they were frightened. But of that fact none of the fellows on the float took notice. The *Little Giant* was on the Creek bottom, and nothing else mattered. Danny Dugan shook his fists after the fleeing rowboat.



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"Duffy's bigger than me," he said, "but I'd just like to have him here for a few minutes."

They stared dully at the water. Their fleet was ruined. Gone were their glorious days at Shelter Cove. They were six chums, and they had but one boat left—and six in the boat would be too many. Likewise the money they had hoped to earn would not come to them. The Submarine Excursion Company had lost half its assets.

Perry, all at once, pulled at Danny's sleeve. "Look here," he said timidly. "Before Mr. Mansfield, who invented the *Gray Whale*, gave the boat to us, she sank up at Shelter Cove. He got her to the surface again. Why can't we get up the *Little Giant*."

Harry gave a shout and waved his arms. "That's right, Danny. The *Gray Whale* sunk and Mr. Mansfield got her to the surface again. Why can't we do that?"

Danny took interest. "How was it done?" he asked eagerly.



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"I wasn't there," Harry answered. "I didn't see it. But Mr. Hinkelstedt would know how to get her up, wouldn't he?"

Danny gave a quick grin. "You just bet he would. I hadn't thought of that. It isn't as though she had a hole stowed in her side, is it? She's all right—just full of water."

They all became suddenly cheerful. Far-rant stared down at the water as though he might see where the boat lay. After a moment he looked across at Danny.

"Won't the tide shift her?" he asked.

Without a word Danny ran up the float and disappeared into the house. Soon he came forth with a coil of heavy rope.

"Tie it up," he said.

Harry blinked. "Tie what up?"

"The *Little Giant*. We'll make fast the rope to her propeller, and lash the other end to the float. Then we'll know where to find her when we want her."

There was plenty of current at this point on



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

Little Giant Creek. Only a short distance below the Creek joined the rugged Big Giant River.

"I'll go over and fix it," Harry offered.

"I'll fix it," said Danny. "This is going to be a tough job. I'm bigger and stronger than you, Harry."

Danny peeled off his clothes and dropped overboard. Thirty seconds later he was on the surface.

"Give me lots of rope," he ordered. "She's down pretty deep."

"Can you manage?" Bob asked.

Danny nodded grimly. "I'd do a tougher job than this to save the *Little Giant*."

He disappeared again. After a while he came to the surface for air. Alternately going down and coming up, he completed his labors. He climbed aboard the float. Bob, seeing that his muscles trembled, gave him a hand.

"Tie that other end to the float," Danny ordered.



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Perry, who had gone back to the *Gray Whale*, tossed Danny a towel. He dried himself and dressed. Then he stretched off on the float. Harry looked at him keenly.

"Tired?"

"I'm all in," Danny answered. "It's no joke holding your breath and working in sixteen feet of water."

"But the *Little Giant* is safe, isn't she?"

"She won't move until the rope rots," was the answer.

Clara Dugan, Danny's sister, came out on the float. Once the *Gray Whale* had saved her from drowning when her canoe had been upset in the Big Giant and she was being swept out to sea. It was this rescue that had cemented a friendship between Danny and the crew of the *Gray Whale*.

"Breakfast is ready," said Clara. "How did you pirates make out?"

"We got it," said Danny. "But—but they sunk the *Little Giant*."



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

Clara gave a gasp of dismay.

"Oh, we can bring it up again," Danny hastened to say. "Come on, fellows; I'm hungry."

As the chums followed him they thought it was just like Danny to remember that they would be hungry and to make preparations for something to eat. And it was just like Clara Dugan, they thought, to tumble out of bed at an early hour and cook something for them.

None of the fellows had said a word, either in the village or at home, about the net at Bass End. But they did not find fault with Danny for having told Clara. Privately they all thought that Clara was a fine sort of sister for a brother to have. You could tell her your troubles, and she'd sympathize with you, and she wouldn't blab what you told her to the whole village, and—and—and she'd get out of bed early in the morning to cook a gang of fellows something to eat. All things



## MR. HINKELSTEDT EXPLAINS

considered, Harry thought, it was too bad that Clara was not Danny's brother instead of his sister. She would have made one fine pal.

The girl gave them bacon and eggs, and rolls and coffee. They ate as though they would never get enough.

"Where did they sink her?" Clara asked.

"Out at the float," Harry answered.

"Danny went down and tied a rope to her," Bob added. "She can't float away. She's safe."

"Of course she's safe," Clara said with a smile, "if you boys have fixed her." She was the sort of girl to give a fellow confidence.

When they had hauled in the net, bass had been dumped into both boats. Those in the *Little Giant* had escaped, of course, but there were fish in the *Gray Whale*. After breakfast they counted them and found twenty-two.

They voted to leave a dozen bass with Clara. Perry wanted to know what they would do with the other ten.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

"Let's go to Shelter Cove and cook them," Harry suggested.

"Have you forgotten," Bob asked, "that Duffy and Mason may come back at any moment?"

Yes, they had forgotten that.

"Look here," Farrant cried, "we won't be able to move if those fellows are going to start hounding us."

"That's what I'm thinking," said Bob.

Here was a pretty pickle to be in. They could not go fishing, they could not go crabbing, they could not go to Shelter Cove. They could not even take out people at the picnics that would come to Mr. Seeley's Creek Park. They could not have been any worse off had the two boats been at the bottom of the Creek.

"Well," Harry said, "we have the net, anyhow."

"I wish we had let their blamed old net alone," Perry blurted. "All we can do now



## MR. HINKELSTEDT EXPLAINS

is to come to the float and make faces at each other. And if those fellows find out about Shelter Cove they'll go up there and wreck our shack. See if they don't."

It surely seemed as though calamities were piling up for the chums. Harry told Danny to take in all the bass to Clara, and Danny obeyed without a word of protest. It was an admission of defeat, and when Danny Dugan was ready to cry quits the situation was desperate indeed.

"Let's go over to Mr. Hinkelstedt's, anyway," Farrant suggested.

They left the *Gray Whale* tied up to the float. Using a flat-bottom they rowed across the Creek. But first Davis took the glass and made sure that Duffy and Mason were not in sight.

It did not occur to any of the boys that the invaders from Great Meadow could be held responsible for the sinking of the *Little Giant*. As they saw the matter, they had



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

taken a net, and Duffy and Mason had retaliated by sinking their boat. Clara had called them pirates. Well, perhaps, that's all they were. They had taken something that did not belong to them.

That phase of the matter had them all worried now. Suppose what they had done was a plain case of stealing?

They were halfway to Mr. Hinkelstedt's, but Harry told Farrant and Davis, who had the oars, to stop rowing.

"Suppose we go back and get the net," he said uneasily. "Let's take it to Mr. Hinkelstedt. He can advise us."

They rowed back to the *Gray Whale*. Taking out the net proved to be a sloppy job. At last, with the net in the flat-bottom, they started to row back across the Creek once more.

The old builder was in his shop. They went in and stood around uneasily. Mr. Hinkelstedt stared at them a moment, took off his



## MR. HINKELSTEDT EXPLAINS

spectacles and shook an accusing finger in their faces.

"What tricks have you been making?" he demanded.

"The *Little Giant* has been sunk," Bob answered. "Can she be raised?"

"Is there a hole stove in, or what?"

"Only the lookout glass broke," Danny said. "She——"

"Of course she did," the old man stormed. "It was too much troubles to put wire over the glass, wasn't it? Is that all that is wrong with her, just waters in her?"

"That's all," said Harry.

"Then we can bring her up. Wait until low tide. Then she will only be in nine feet of water. Her ventilators will be out. We can pump some waters from her. Then we put a rope around her, and put the rope around a drum, and up she comes."

"How—how much will it cost?" Perry asked cautiously. He was the treasurer, and



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

he wanted to do this thing in a business-like way.

"Ach, five dollars," said Mr. Hinkelstedt. "Maybe some more, maybe not so much." He looked at Danny suspiciously. "How did the *Little Giant* get into troubles?"

"I'll show you," said Harry. He went out with Bob and Perry, and came back dragging the net with their assistance. At sight of the net Mr. Hinkelstedt raised his hands in horror.

"Where did you get that? You cannot use that nets for fishes in the Creek."

"Why not?" Harry demanded. "Duffy and Mason used it."

"Duffy and Mason? Who are this Duffy and Mason?"

"Two big boys from Great Meadow. They were netting bass away up the Creek. That's how the *Little Giant* was sunk. We went up and took their net."

"Ach!" cried the old man. "Why did you



## MR. HINKELSTEDT EXPLAINS

not tell me about that nets? Did you not know that it was against the laws to use nets in the Creek?"

"But nets have been used—" Harry began.

"That was before the basses were put into the Creek," cried Mr. Hinkelstedt excitedly.

"Now it is against the laws to use a nets. Tell me all about this Duffy and Mason."

So they told him the whole story, starting with their discovery of Bass End as a fishing place, the appearance of Duffy and Mason on the Creek, the disappearance of the fish, and their discovery of the net. They told how they had shifted the net, how the lads from Great Meadow had ceased to come for a while.

"They were frightened," said Mr. Hinkelstedt. "They thought the game wardens was after them."

Bob related how they had returned to the Creek, and of how the submarines had that morning started out to take the net. They



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

ended with a description of the pursuit and the disaster to the *Little Giant*.

"Foolish, foolish!" the old man fumed. "You should have taken their nets long ago. They were breaking the laws."

Harry's eyes became thoughtful. "Let me ask you a question, Mr. Hinkelstedt. They were breaking the law. Then they can't make trouble for us, can they?"

"What do you mean, make troubles?"

"I mean for taking their net. They can't get after us for that, can they?"

Mr. Hinkelstedt made it plain that Duffy and Mason could cause no trouble, and that if the boys reported the matter to the game warden the fishermen from Great Meadow would be arrested.

"Oh, I don't want them arrested," cried Danny. "They've been brought up pretty rough. I guess they haven't had much chance to be all right—they haven't had homes like we've had."



## MR. HINKELSTEDT EXPLAINS

Harry's eyes snapped. "But we could make them toe the mark, couldn't we?"

"How?" asked Danny.

"Make them promise to let us alone."

"How could we make them promise that?"

"Well, suppose we told them that if they didn't let us alone we'd tell about the net and——"

Danny gave a yell and ran out of the shop. A moment later he poked his head back through the doorway.

"Come on," he cried. "What are you fellows waiting for? Let's get over to Great Meadow and dictate terms to Duffy and Mason."



## CHAPTER XII

### THE SURRENDER

THEY crowded out after Danny, and tumbled into the flat-bottom. Mr. Hinkelstedt followed them to the float edge and waved his arms.

"Do not let them make you frightened," he roared. "You have the law on your sides."

"Oh, we'll talk to them," Danny called. "I'll soak it to them for sinking the *Little Giant*."

"Make it a hard soak," yelled Mr. Hinkelstedt.

The flat-bottom went across the Creek at a fast clip. Soon they were tied up at the Dugan float. They scampered out to the Creek road. A trolley car approached. They



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stopped it, climbed aboard, and were off for Great Meadow.

The Submarine Excursion Company was vitally concerned with respect to the result of this trip. So Perry, as treasurer, paid the fares.

They could see much now that had not been plain to them before. They could understand why Duffy and Mason had set their net by night, and had taken it up in the morning before honest fishermen were astir. And they understood the sudden departure of the law-breakers from the Creek when they found that their net had been monkeyed with.

"But if they were so much afraid," Perry asked, "why did they chase after us when they found we had their net."

"To get the net," Harry answered promptly. "I've thought the whole thing out. If they could get the net back, they could deny anything we might say. But if we had the net, and could show how many fish they were



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selling each day at Great Meadow, that would about finish them."

Bob nodded. "That sounds reasonable," he said.

"Of course it's reasonable," Harry stated. "If it wasn't for me, where would this crowd be? We'll get some real fishing now. You can thank me for taking that net and getting things going. If we hadn't taken the net we wouldn't know that it is against the law."

"And the *Little Giant* wouldn't be sunk," Danny added.

"That's your fault," Harry cried indignantly, "for not protecting your lookouts."

"I'll protect them as soon as we get her up," Danny vowed.

They had no idea just what they would say to Duffy and Mason. At heart, even though they had the law on their side, they were all a trifle uneasy.

When the car reached Great Meadow they stepped off and looked at Danny.



## THE SURRENDER

"Well," Harry asked, "what do we do now?"

Danny scratched the tip of one ear. "Let's—let's go to that butcher shop and ask where we can find either of those fellows."

They did not know the way, so they followed Danny. He led them directly to the shop. But as he started through the doorway he suddenly drew back and stepped on Harry's toes.

"They're in there now," he gulped.

Farrant took a deep breath. "I'm not afraid of them," he said. He walked into the shop. "I want to talk to you fellows," he announced bravely.

His courage was all assumed. But in another moment it was real. For at sight of him Duffy and Mason seemed to shrink. "They're not afraid of me," Farrant thought; "they're afraid because I know they have done wrong."

"What—what do you want?" Mason asked.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP.

"Come outside," said Farrant.

The butcher, with an air of astonishment, watched the three boys leave his shop. Outside Farrant joined his chums. Danny looked curiously at Duffy, and Duffy's face seemed to whiten. He was wondering, no doubt, what Danny was going to do about the sinking of the submarine.

The butcher had come to the doorway. Farrant led the party out of earshot.

"We have not told about that net," he said.

"Haven't told anybody?" Duffy asked eagerly.

"Oh, we've told some people," said Farrant, "but they'll keep their mouths shut as long as we want them to. We haven't told any game wardens."

"Are—are you going to?" Mason asked through dry lips. He was thoroughly frightened.

"That depends," Farrant answered calmly.

"On what?"



## THE SURRENDER

"On just what you intend to do about the *Little Giant*."

"I didn't mean to sink her," Duffy pleaded. "I threw that sinker to scare you fellows. I didn't mean——"

"Well," Farrant broke in, "suppose you get her up for us."

"How?"

"By paying what it will cost."

"How much will that be?"

"Five dollars."

Duffy hesitated a moment, then looked at Mason. Mason nodded.

"Pay them," he said. It was plain that he was glad to be out of the scrape for so little as five dollars.

"And you fellows must promise to keep out of the Creek," Farrant continued.

"We'll keep out," Duffy promised.

Farrant looked at his friends. "I guess that's all, isn't it?" They nodded. Duffy and Mason withdrew, consulted, and came back at



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

length with three one-dollar bills, and two dollars in silver.

"Give it to Perry," said Farrant. "He's treasurer."

Perry took the money.

"When do we get the net back?" Duffy asked.

Here was a question too deep for Farrant. He nodded to Bob. This time Bob and Danny backed away for a conference. When they came back Bob acted as spokesman.

"You don't get the net," he announced.

At that there was a growl from Duffy and Mason. They felt they were getting out of the woods in good fashion, and that they could afford to show their teeth.

"We get the net," Duffy announced, "or there'll be trouble."

"Then it's trouble," said Farrant at once. He seemed filled with a warlike spirit. "Give them their money, Perry. We'll send a notice to the game warden."



## THE SURRENDER

Duffy wilted. He said that it wasn't fair to keep the net, and that he needed it for other fishing he might do.

"Nix!" said Farrant. "If you have that net you may be tempted to drop it into Little Giant Creek. Well, what are you going to do?"

"Oh, I was only fooling about trouble," Duffy said humbly. "We'll call things square just as they stand. Is that all right?"

Farrant said it was. Duffy and Mason shambled back toward the butcher shop. The chums raced away to get the next trolley for home. Farrant had talked big and all that, but just the same they wanted to see the last of Great Meadow.

The ride back was a merry journey. When they reached the Dugan float they marched across to the water with a triumphant military air. Clara Dugan reported that Mr. Hinkelstedt had been over and had told her that he would start work on the *Little Giant* next day.



## GRAY WHALE—FLAGSHIP

The tide was low, and they could see the ventilators of the submarine sticking out of the water.

"Well," said Danny, "all I can say is that she went down in a good cause. We have cleared the Creek of an enemy. And—and——"

"And what?" demanded Harry.

"And the fishing's going to be mighty good at Bass End. Let's go up to Shelter Cove and have a crab feast."

Before they left the float Bob hauled down the flagship pennant from the *Gray Whale*. He handed it to Danny.

"What's that for?" Danny asked.

"The *Little Giant* is the flagship now," said Bob. "I've talked this over with Harry and Perry. We think you deserve the honor."

Danny's cheeks flushed with pleasure. He folded the flag carefully and placed it in his pocket. And he promised them that when



## THE SURRENDER

the *Little Giant* was raised he'd run up the pennant first thing, and they'd all go off and have finer adventures than any that had yet come to them.

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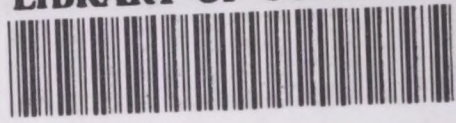








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